



NAVY NEWS

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NOBLE DEEDS

AVE, ASTUTE

'SUPER-SUB' LAUNCH
AND SUPPLEMENT

FALKLANDS 25

FULL COVERAGE
OF CEREMONIES

SILHOUETTED against the Baltic dawn, a Royal Marine of 40 Commando pauses next to a mortar on Gold Beach on the Danish island of Bornholm as Exercise Noble Mariner reaches its climax.

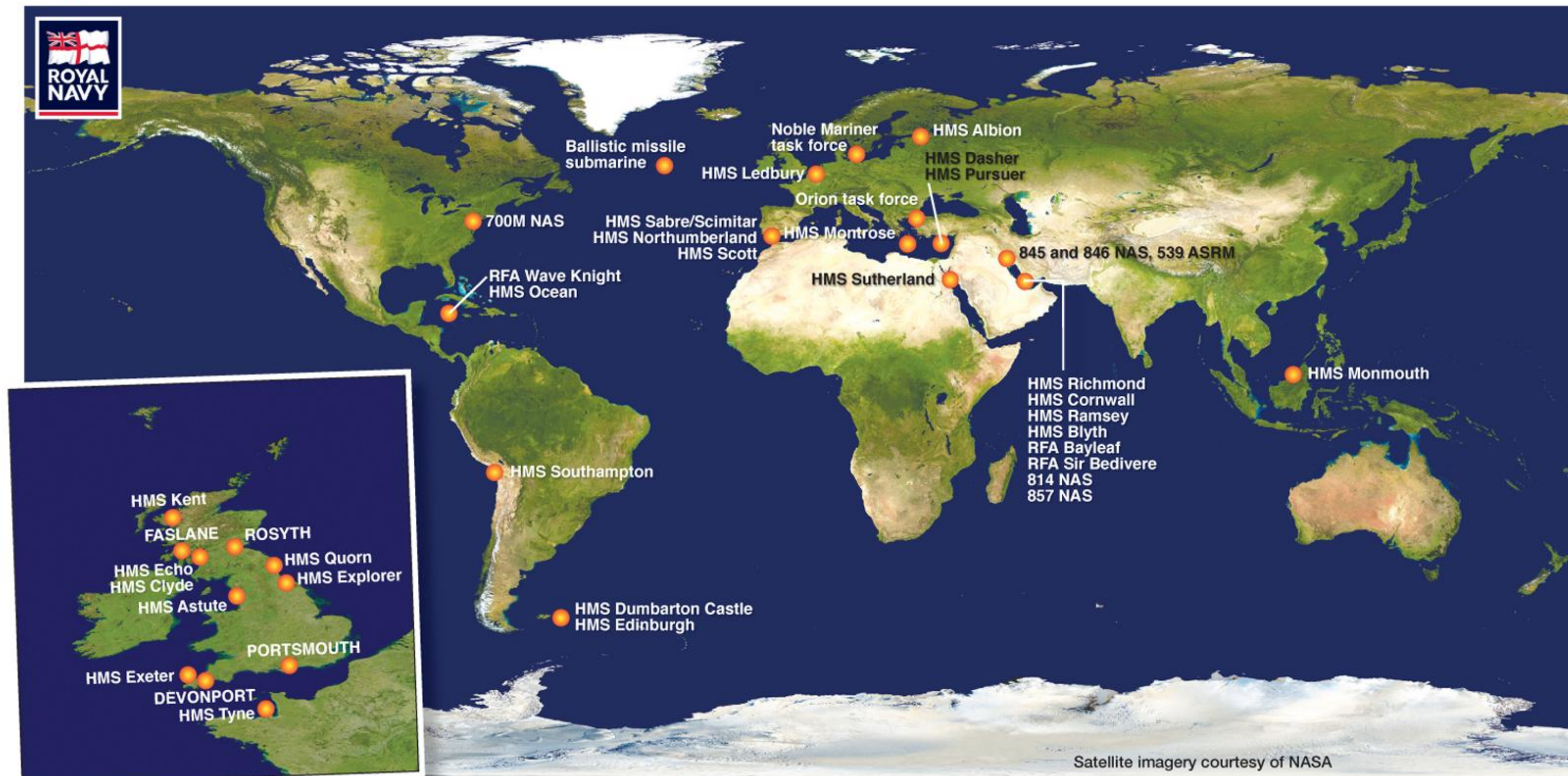
The Royal Navy provided the largest single maritime force for the major war games which were designed to test the readiness of NATO's Response Force – an international task group of massed ground, sea and air power – to deal with a global crisis.

See pages 25-27 for reports from Denmark.

Picture: PO(Phot) Brad Bradbury,
NATO Northwood



■ GLOBAL MISSION: AROUND THE WORLD WITH 815 NAVAL AIR SQUADRON



Fleet Focus

MY COLLEAGUES will chastise me for using the word, but welcome to a 'bumper' issue of *Navy News* which, like the RN, casts its net across the globe this month.

And perhaps no-one in the Senior Service cast their net wider than the men and women of **815 NAS**. We haven't the space on this map to champion their global mission, but we have on pages 30-32.

And talking of global missions... **HMS Monmouth's** Far East deployment continues apace; the frigate has most recently found herself in Brunei (see opposite).

Equally varied is **HMS Southampton's** tour of duty, half-way around the world. She is steadily making her way to the Falklands via the Caribbean and Pacific, having most recently visited Peru (see page 46).

She will take over from **HMS Edinburgh** (crewed by the men and women of **HMS Exeter**) which has been heavily involved in Falklands commemorations... as has Exeter herself (crewed by the men and women of Edinburgh in turn); see pages 15-17 for coverage.

They said it couldn't be done, but **HMS Albion** proved them wrong by becoming the largest foreign warship to squeeze into the heart of St Petersburg (see page 8).

Albion's visit to the great Russian city came at the end of NATO war games, Exercise Noble Mariner, which saw **HMS Ark Royal** and **Illustrious** and **40 Cdo** lead the sizeable RN/RFA/RM input alongside Allied navies in the Baltic. Our three-page report begins on page 25.

Talking of task forces, the Orion group – HM Ships **Hurworth**, **Atherstone**, **Shoreham** and **Walney** plus mother ship **RFA Cardigan Bay** – has moved from the Peloponnese to Turkey on the latest stage of their minehunting deployment (see page 10).

The RN's largest warship **HMS Ocean** has been operating with the US Marine Corps' Wild Geese, while one of her **700M NAS** Merlins disembarked to show the people of Washington the helicopter which will soon ferry their President around (see page 7).

Survey ship **HMS Endurance** finally disappears from our map after her lengthy winter deployment, having safely returned home to Pompey (turn to page 6).

Also home after a seemingly interminable period away is **HMS Echo**. Within days of arriving in Devonport she was off to Glasgow to survey the Clyde and its approaches (see page 6).

Another vessel homeward-bound following a drawn-out mission is **HMS Sutherland**; she has handed over Gulf duties to her sister **HMS Richmond**, who has now joined **HMS Cornwall** off Iraq (see page 5) where **RFA Sir Bedivere** and the **Naval Transition Team** are hard at work training the Iraqi Navy (see page 24).

The crew of **HMS Ledbury** have introduced a new game into RN folklore; they've also been busy checking on fishermen off Holland (see page 7).

Many happy returns to the good folk of **RNAS Culdrose** who have celebrated their 60th birthday this month (actually the anniversary was officially April, but the weather's better in June). See page 13.

And finally (and a few years late, admittedly) **HMS Astute** appears for the first time on our map. We have extensive coverage of her launch on page 9 and in our pull-out supplement.

Hello, goodbye, Clyde

NEW patrol ship **HMS Clyde** has paid her first – and probably last – visit to the river for which she was named.

Clyde heads south to the Falklands this summer where she will in all likelihood spend her entire career as the islands' guardship.

She is, however, affiliated with the borough of Inverclyde and it was only right that its people see their ship before the 8,000-mile journey south.

Lt Cdr Simon Hopper and his 40-strong ship's company took Clyde to Greenock for four days.

Despite the inclement Bank Holiday weather the visit nevertheless provided welcome respite for the sailors after undergoing operational sea training to prepare them for their Falklands mission.

While some sailors hosted locals aboard, including civic dignitaries and school children, a party headed to the Sir Gabriel Wood Mariners Home in Greenock, home to some 30 elderly sailors – merchant seamen and ex-RN – to share dits of the sea and to spruce up the gardens for the summer.

With the visit to Scotland over, Clyde paid a brief visit to Portsmouth, her 'home' port and birthplace, before beginning a month of amphibious warfare and aviation training and

then starting the long journey south.

Built and owned by the VT Group and leased to the Royal Navy, Clyde will take over from Dumbarton Castle as the Falklands' guardship later this year.

The aim is to carry out all maintenance work on her in the South Atlantic, rather than bring her home every three years as the Navy has done with the existing Falkland Islands vessels.

● **Cllr Michael McCormick, Provost (mayor) of Inverclyde** welcomes **HMS Clyde** to Greenock



Northumberland's Mediterranean blitz

A WEEK is a long time in politics.

And in the life of **HMS Northumberland**, too.

The Devonport-based frigate squeezed a myriad of activities into a week of frantic training off Gibraltar, the highlight of a brief Mediterranean deployment.

Northumberland headed to the colony chiefly for a week of gunnery and warfare students to complete their various courses.

Fifteen prospective gun controllers and captains of the gun filed aboard, as well as nine principal warfare officer students.

All found themselves tested

with medium and close-range gunnery exercises (air defence exercises were often thrown into the mix just to keep the students on their toes).

Also tested were the Naval Gunfire Support Forward Observers of 148 Commando Battery – the specialist artillery spotters who go ashore ahead of an assault/bombardment before picking out targets for the guns of the Fleet.

They dropped in – literally – on Northumberland, tumbling out of an RAF Hercules at 2,000 feet above the Med, and were promptly plucked out of the water by the

frigate's sea boat.

Surprisingly, this was the ship's first visit to Gibraltar since 2003. Most sailors headed across the Spanish border to La Linea, but 30 hardy souls decided no visit to the Rock would be complete without a run up the 2½ mile winding track to the top of the mountain which gives the colony its sobriquet. CPO Radcliffe and Clubz posted the fastest time – 26m 56s.

The ship also hosted Cdre Allan Adair, the outgoing Governor of Gibraltar, as he bade farewell to his staff.

With the visit to the Rock over, Northumberland headed across

the Strait to north Africa and two 'defence industry days' in Algiers where she hosted British firms looking to sell their wares to local firms and organisations.

The lightning trip to Gibraltar and Algiers proved to be among the last acts of Cdr Tom Guy's command after two years.

"While I am sad to be leaving my team, this brief Mediterranean deployment allowed me to go out on a high," he added.

"I'm sure that the ship will continue to show the spirit and professionalism that I have valued so much during my time in command."



Kings, real and imagined

FIRST, the real king.

Several sailors from the Black Duke met the Sultan of Brunei or attended a parade in his honour as their ship paid a high-profile visit to the former British protectorate on the latest stage of the frigate's Far East tour.

HMS Monmouth spent five days in the sultanate in sweltering humidity which did not stop the 180-strong crew getting involved in a host of events.

Upon arriving in Brunei, the Black Duke's Merlin helicopter promptly disembarked and parked itself outside the country's chief conference centre for the Brunei Defence Exhibition...

... while inside the convention centre a team from Monmouth demonstrated some of the wizardry they use aboard the ship.

The Sultan opened the exhibition, and made a bee-line for the Merlin, chatting at length with its flight.

The Devonport frigate's stay in Brunei coincided with the country's Armed Forces Day, the highlight of which is a spectacular parade in front of the ruler; CO Cdr Tim Peacock and some of officers were invited to watch proceedings, which concluded with an air display.

Watched by rather smaller crowds was a clash between the ship's football team and an ex-pat side; the latter were far

more accustomed to Brunei's climatic conditions and promptly dispatched the Black Duke team 6-3.

And some sailors were seized by the spirit of adventure, heading off on an enlightening trawl through the rainforest where they experienced Brunei natives living in traditional longhouses.

And now, the imaginary king.

Upon leaving Brunei, Monmouth began the long haul south for Australia and New Zealand.

In doing so, of course, she crossed the equator, an occasion which demanded King Neptune to hold court.

There were, amazingly, 120 equatorial 'virgins' aboard the Black Duke (that's roughly two thirds of the ship's company) from CO Cdr Tim Peacock and some of his senior command team, including XO Paul Bristowe and WO Baz Langridge, down to some of the youngest ABs.

Much of Monmouth's deployment has been concentrated in south-east Asia, specifically Singapore and the Malay peninsula.

Much of the time around Singapore was devoured by Exercise Bersama Shield, regular war games involving British, Malay, Singaporean, Australian and New Zealand naval forces.

Monmouth broke off from

the exercises briefly to pay her respects to Falklands dead.

While the remainder of the Bersama Shield forces were, perhaps aptly, engrossed in an air defence exercise, Monmouth's sailors gathered on the flight deck for a ceremony led by the Rev John Vere-Thompson.

Just seconds before the four veterans of the conflict serving in Monmouth cast a wreath into the ocean, two F16 jets roared overhead.

With Bersama Shield over, Monmouth sailed to Singapore for her second visit to the former colony on this deployment.

There she welcomed First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band aboard during 11 days alongside at Sembawang, accompanied by HMNZS Te Mana, HMNZS Endeavour and HMAS Adelaide.

The gathering of Aussies, New Zealanders and Brits naturally meant the sporting gauntlet was thrown down on the football and rugby pitches.

There was more sport at the end of Imdex07, a huge defence conference and exhibition (the largest such exhibition in Asia) hosted by Singapore.

Twenty-two ships from 13 nations mustered for Imdex as defence companies from across the globe tried to sell their wares to delegates from more than 50 nations.

Imdex culminated in a mini Olympiad with football, water polo, badminton and tug-of-war among the sports contested.

In keeping with the fortunes of British sport, the Black Duke bowed out of the football cup after a semi-final defeat on penalties...

● King Neptune – aka CPO(MEM) Daz Ashton – holds court aboard Monmouth as she crosses the equator, watched by the (Very) Old Bill and (above) the Black Duke heads east under skies filled with foreboding

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Griffiths, FRPU Whale Island



Scarborough discovers Explorer



PATROL boat HMS Explorer celebrated her new affiliation with the people of Scarborough by demonstrating to them what she can do.

With the town's mayor and MP plus other VIPs aboard, the Archer-class craft joined two of the resort's lifeboats and an RAF search and rescue Sea King for a mock disaster in South Bay.

Explorer is based just along the coast in Kingston-upon-Hull and serves not just that city's university but also students from Leeds, Sheffield and York.

And it was four midshipman students, rather than the invited guests, who were transferred first to a lifeboat, then via winch to the yellow Sea King of 202 Squadron based at RAF Leconfield.

And then, via winch again, they were deposited back on the small patrol vessel – not especially easy given her rather limited deck space, although the benign North Sea conditions certainly helped.

"The winching serial was a great opportunity to work with the lifeboat and

display our capabilities to the town," said CO Lt Andy Brown.

"It also served as an excellent training opportunity for everyone."

The RNLI 'scrambled' their Mersey-class lifeboat, the grandly titled Fanny Victoria Wilkinson and Frank Stubbs, and their inshore vessel, the only-slightly-less-grandly-titled John Wesley Hillard II, for the exercise.

"Our crews benefited hugely from working with the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force," said RNLI coxswain Wave Crookes.

"We're very aware of the importance of working with other agencies to maintain our

effectiveness and save lives at sea."

As for Scarborough itself, it enjoyed long (almost 40 years) and fruitful relations with assault ship HMS Fearless until she paid off in 2002. More recently, the resort has been bonded with tanker RFA Wave Ruler.

Explorer and the town's council ratified their affiliation back in January, but it was spring before the vessel could call upon Scarborough thanks to her busy schedule. The boat is back there again this month.

● HMS Explorer speeds across Scarborough's South Bay as an RAF Sea King closes in, watched by the town's lifeboat



Black is the new yellow

VENERABLE she might be, but there's plenty of life left yet in minehunter HMS Cattistock, evidenced by two pieces of hi-tech equipment just fitted.

The Portsmouth-based warship has celebrated a quarter of a century as a commissioned vessel.

The anniversary passed while the ship was undergoing an overhaul; she emerged from that upgrade with SeaFox and WECDIS electronic charts.

The latter – described in layman's terms by Cattistock's navigator Lt Hugh Harris as "a Tom Tom sat nav for a ship" – is becoming standard across the RN and RFA Fleets.

SeaFox will become the standard piece of minehunting kit for Hunt and Sandown-class warships as the existing 'yellow submarines' are phased out.

The mother ship's Sonar 2193 finds a suspicious object and passes on the details to SeaFox, which is launched, locates and then destroys the mine (and itself); Cattistock also carries a version of SeaFox minus the explosive charge but fitted with a camera which can be launched to visually identify a contact.

Sadly – and rather dully – the new piece of kit is painted black (*Spoilsports – Ed*)... although the trial version used by Cattistock on trials (*pictured, below*) was orange and black.

The RN has ordered 16 SeaFox systems for £35m; they will be fitted to Sandowns and Hunts over the next three years.

With engineers and electricians swarming over the ship, sailors dispersed to the four corners of Europe. Young officers could be found at HMS Collingwood undergoing navigational and officer-of-the-watch training on the bridge simulator.

Ratings could be found scaling the three highest peaks in England, Wales and Scotland (Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Ben Nevis) respectively, all accomplished within three days and despite a smattering of snow on the slopes of the Scottish mountain.

Other Cattistockers climbed even higher... on foreign shores.

Five sailors took advantage of the RN's adventure training exercise Bavarian Surprise in (surprise, surprise) the Bavarian Alps.

The Cattistock party was a mix of absolute beginners (bosun PO Gareth Stockley) and relatively proficient skiers who glided down the slopes of the Nebel Horn near Bad Hindelang. By day temperatures topped 22°C; by night they dropped dramatically, ensuring the pistes were perfect.

Back in the UK, the entire ship's company converged in Portsmouth for a birthday party at the Royal Maritime Club (formerly the Royal Sailors' Home Club), while officers also held a ladies' night for wives and girlfriends, plus former Commanding Officer Rear Admiral George Zambellas, aboard HMS Warrior.

There is one final birthday celebration and that is a cocktail party for its affiliates and supporters, including villagers from Cattistock in Dorset.



● Lean, mean fighting machines... The Active Endeavour force heads for Taranto, as seen from the forecandle of HMS Montrose

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Preston, FRPU Whale Island

Montrose plays an Active role

THE men and women of HMS Montrose shared their expertise at counter-terrorism operations with one of the 'new kids on the block' in the global struggle against illegal trade on the high seas.

The frigate was joined by a Ukrainian corvette in Crete as NATO allies prepared to whip the Eastern European sailors into shape for Operation Active Endeavour.

Active Endeavour was introduced barely a month after the terrorist attacks on the USA in September 2001 with Allied navies casting their net across the Mediterranean on the lookout for people traffickers, drug-runners, terrorists and other criminals using the sea as a highway.

The Ukraine – not a NATO nation – said it was willing to assist the campaign in 2005.

And so it was that the corvette Ternopil sailed into Soudha Bay to exercise with Montrose for more than a week.

First the important bit, however. An afternoon of sport followed by a barbecue and karaoke session

broke any ice and Ukrainian dance music proved a surprising hit with the Montrose team.

With the partying over, the duo put to sea... and were promptly attacked by Greek fast patrol boats.

The raiders had barely been thwarted when the acid test began – finding, shadowing and finally boarding a suspicious merchant vessel.

And then the finger was pointed at the Type 23 frigate. She played the role of femme fatale, carrying hidden contraband. It was left to the Ternopil's boarding team to safely inspect the ship and find the illegal goods (which it did).

By the time the two ships reached the Italian naval base of Taranto, the Ukrainians' board and search operations were sufficiently honed to officially join the Active Endeavour force on patrol until the middle of this month.

As for Montrose, she has been committed to Active Endeavour since the turn of the year. She will be home in Devonport in a few weeks.





AWAY from the HMS Cornwall inquiries, the highest profile naval event these past few weeks has been the launch of HMS Astute. The boat must be the bargain of the century. She cost a mere £3.5m according to the *Daily Telegraph* and has torpedoes which can travel 1,240 miles (*I'll think twice about using the Gosport ferry now* - Asst Ed). The correspondent of *The Times* was rather more accurate:

HMS Astute is a submarine like no other.

She could detect the QE2 an ocean away and she whispers through the water leaving no more sonar trace than a large dolphin.

BAE Systems boasts that the Astute is more complicated than a space shuttle.

It is the product of more than 700 designs and more than one million components.

For all her size and menace, Astute remains the strange, silent, stealthy place submarines have always been - an enclosed and artificial world that only a few could learn to live inside.

- The Times

REDUCTIONS in the size of the Royal Navy's attack submarine force could jeopardise the Service's ability to meet current and likely future operational requirements, warns a RUSI report.

Current force levels "are already stretched to meet operational demands".

- Jane's Defence Weekly

Another new ship has been making headlines even before her launch. Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond is courting controversy in Sheffield.

SHEFFIELD has snubbed the Royal Navy by turning down the rare honour of being affiliated with a new ship.

The city council has refused to be associated with HMS Diamond, saying it only wants a ship named after the city.

"The links we have with the Royal Navy are part of Sheffield's heritage," said Cllr Jackie Drayton.

"We are sure the people of Sheffield want to continue these links through a ship called HMS Sheffield and not HMS Diamond."

- Sheffield Star

And finally... *The Sun* gets in a tizz about the fate of its topless beauties...

TOP brass torpedo topless totty.

Sailors, submariners and Royal Marines have been warned they will be fined if they disobey orders to take down pin-ups of Page 3 girls.

Ex-Navy man Lee Madden said: "It will cause a riot."

A Navy source added: "There are more serious things to worry about than the type of posters on our walls."

- The Sun

Indeed there are... but not in *The Sun* evidently. Anyway, despite the sensationalism Page 3 is not banned. 'Top brass' have, however, asked personnel to act sensitively, respect their shipmates/comrades and be aware that some of the pictures within its pages might cause offence.

Superstars' job is complete

FRIGATE HMS Sutherland is on her way home having handed over Gulf duties to her sister, eight months after leaving Britain's shores.

The waters off the Egyptian port of Safaga were the setting for the transfer of responsibilities - and some kit - between Sutherland and Richmond.

The former has been away from home in Devonport since September 25 last year, spending the bulk of that time in the northern Arabian Gulf safeguarding Iraq's oil platforms.

More recently she has diverged from the Gulf to operate in the Indian Ocean on security operations and exercises with Allied navies.

Those maritime security operations persisted into the Red Sea, before Sutherland put into Safaga to give her crew a break.

The sailors divided their time between sightseeing (the Valley of the Kings proved especially popular) and scuba diving.

With official duties with Richmond done, Sutherland headed through Suez and into the Mediterranean for yet more security work, while Richmond headed east to take up station.

And if the names Brian Jacks, Jonah Barrington and David Vine

conjure up the halcyon days of television, then Sutherland's flight deck evoked such memories by bringing back 70s sports show *Superstars*.

The original TV programme pitted some of the leading names in British sport against each other in a variety of physical challenges, including 100-metre dash, 800 metre, weightlifting, rowing, tennis, bicycle racing, a gym test, and swimming.

Of course, not all these sports could be replicated on a Type 23 frigate, but Jack has a wonderful knack at improvisation.

And so each mess submitted at least one team of six superstars to grapple with a 500-metre row, 40 bench presses, 50 squat thrusts, 50 sit-ups, a foam drum carry and finally three rope climbs.

Oh yes, and it was all done in the blazing Middle East heat with temperatures over 35°C.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Sutherland's Royal Marines boarding party set the fastest time of all competitors.



A liberating time for Tyne

HMS Tyne paid a return visit to Jersey to help islanders mark the 62nd anniversary of liberation from the Nazi yoke.

The Portsmouth-based fishery patrol vessel was at the heart of commemorations marking 60 years since the end of war in 2005, celebrations which were attended by the Queen.

Two years on, the anniversary was a more muted affair - but celebrated nonetheless.

With the Channel Islands being the only part of the home islands to be occupied during the 1939-1945, liberation day is a public holiday.

The ship's company provided a White Ensign Colour Party and a 15-man guard to lead the liberation day parade through the streets of Jersey's capital, St Helier, a parade which ended in Liberation Square, where the salute was taken by the Duke of Kent, followed by a service of thanksgiving.

Tyne also supplied a guard of honour for a wreath-laying ceremony and remembrance service organised by Arctic Convoy veterans.

Away from ceremonies, the sailors got stuck in with the island's fire brigade to see how the two could work together to tackle blazes at sea.

Tyne's presence in St Helier was honoured with a *vin d'honneur* - not, as it sounds, a fine wine, but a reception

- in the town hall, and the ship returned the favour by inviting dignitaries aboard for lunch.

Somehow, the small ship's company also found time to squeeze in a football tournament and a golf match against the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (the sailors were victorious on the fairways and runners-up in the football).

And on the short trip across the Channel from her home port, the patrol ship hosted youngsters from TS Jersey, the Air Cadets Corps and Combined Cadet Force to give them a taste of life at sea, complete with man overboard drills - using a dummy, not the cadets - the chance to steer and to tackle (mock) fires. See page 44 for more details.

After the Jersey visit came another island for the patrol ship: Anglesey.

Tyne spent four days in the port of Holyhead - instead of the overnight stay she normally makes when taking a break from fishery protection duties in the Irish Sea.

The highlight of the weekend in Wales was opening an exhibition championing Holyhead's wartime role in a refurbished air raid shelter.

The ship also hosted North Wales police officers, not for a reception but for a joint training exercise to see how the Royal Navy and police could react to a security incident.



● HMS Richmond sails past her sister HMS Sutherland into the Egyptian port of Safaga

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Trumpeter and Exeter on ceremony

THE guns of HMS Exeter echoed across Cardiff Bay as the ship marked the state opening of the Welsh Assembly.

One sixth of the destroyer's ship's company lined the stairs to the parliamentary building and raised the Royal Standard as the Queen arrived to perform the state ceremony.

And as she did, the ship fired a 21-gun salute.

Exeter has been the RN's roving ambassador around the UK this month.

She visited London (see pages 15-17) in support of Falklands 25th anniversary events, hosting veterans of that conflict of which she herself is a survivor, and joined a flotilla of three warships – HMS Lancaster, Charger and Biter – in Barrow to mark the launch of HMS Astute (see our pull-out supplement).

Patrol boat HMS Trumpeter has also been on ceremonial duties.

The small P2000 vessel is normally home to students from Bristol University.

She swapped youth for experience, however, as she sailed into Torquay for the town's commemorations marking the 63rd anniversary of D-Day.

Trumpeter's CO Lt Will King took eight Devon Normandy veterans to sea in his craft before heading back into port to take part in a parade and service of remembrance.

The Air Force provided jets from its base at RAF Valley, while suitable musical accompaniment was supplied by the Band of HM Royal Marines, Lymington.

HMS Glamorgan

IN THE final part of our Falklands 25th trilogy last month we erroneously stated that HMS Glamorgan fired a Sea Slug to prevent an Exocet hitting her... instead of the Sea Cat she actually fired.

We also neglected to mention in our bibliography Ian Inskip's *Ordeal by Exocet*, the biography of Glamorgan in the war and a constant companion at our side when compiling the supplement.

Deeds to Echo down the years



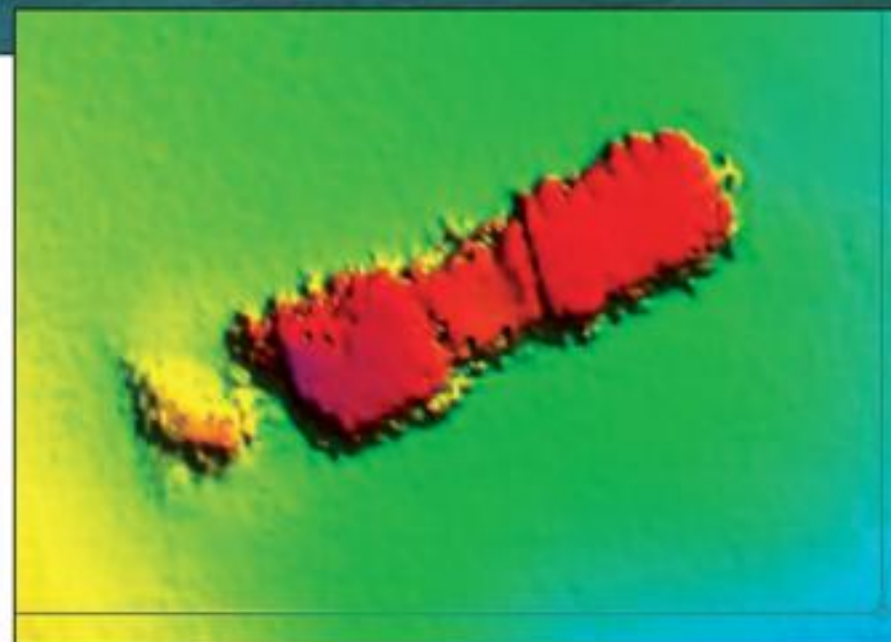
ONE year and six days after last seeing Plymouth Hoe, HMS Echo spied Smeaton's Tower again at the end of a mammoth deployment to the Middle and Far East.

The hydrographic survey vessel has ended her 371-day deployment with her computer systems brimming with data for the UK Hydrographic Office to update Admiralty Charts.

The bulk of Echo's survey work was conducted in the Far East, with time too in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (pictured, above).

In doing so, she visited Vladivostok in Russia, Yokosuka in Japan, Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam and Singapore *inter alia*.

By rotating her crew – of the 72-strong ship's company only 48 are required aboard at any one time – Echo was able to be operational on 341 of the 371 days away from Devonport (that's more than nine out of every ten days).



● A colourful sonar image produced by Echo of the wreck of HMS Dasher

She continued gathering data on her way home through the Mediterranean.

Working with the national hydrographer of Malta, the ship helped to identify the wreck of legendary Gloster Gladiator 'Hope', used by the RAF six decades earlier to defend the

island against Luftwaffe attack.

The wartime links persisted upon Echo's return to UK waters.

Barely had the ship berthed in Devonport than she was off surveying again, this time around the Firth of Clyde.

There she produced vivid 3D images of the wreck of wartime escort carrier HMS Dasher.

Dasher blew up in March 1943, possibly as the result of her aviation fuel tanks catching fire, and sank off the Cumbraes with the loss of 379 men.

Echo's work continued up the Clyde as far as Govan, before she berthed at King George V Dock to give her crew a chance to enjoy the sights of Glasgow.

And having enjoyed Glasgow – sailors 'brushed up' for their visit to the city by watching episodes of the Scottish comedy series *Still Game* – Echo was off surveying again, this time in the Hebrides around the island of Islay.

Ark assumes flagship role

HMS Ark Royal has taken over the duties as Britain's flagship after successfully leading huge NATO war games in the Baltic.

The flat-top served as the command centre for Rear Admiral Neil Morissetti and his staff as they directed operations by five different task groups composed of ships from ten Allied nations during the climax of Noble Mariner (see pages 25-27).

With the exercise over, Ark put into the Polish port of Gdynia in the Bay of Gdansk, where she assumed the mantle of Fleet Flagship, bringing an end to a seven-month 'regeneration' following a refit in Rosyth.

"After seven months of extremely hard work, I and my ship's company are extremely proud to be assuming the duties of Fleet Flagship," said Capt Mike Mansergh, Ark's Commanding Officer.

"Ark Royal is ready to be deployed anywhere in the world."

She was handed the 'baton' by HMS Illustrious, also deployed on Noble Mariner, where she hosted the recently-formed Naval Strike Wing, the Fleet Air Arm half of Joint Force Harrier.

The visit to Gdynia offered a chance to take on a local Polish football side (Ark went down 7-3, watched by 500 spectators), head for the fairways to decide the title of Ark's best golfer and some sightseeing.

Numerous sailors headed up the Vistula valley to Malbork and the red-brick former fortress of the Teutonic Knights, Marienburg Castle. A more sobering experience was a visit to Stutthof Concentration Camp, today a memorial to the 85,000 people who died there under the Nazis and the countless more who were sadistically abused by them.

More upbeat was a tour of Gdansk, the historic Hanseatic port and birthplace of the Solidarity movement in Poland, just around the bay from Gdynia.

A wave and a parade for the Red Plum

A WAVE for dad from Isobel Tarrant as the Red Plum returns from a nine-month tour of duty in the southern ocean.

Dad, as it happens, is Capt Bob Tarrant, HMS Endurance's CO, bringing the Antarctic survey ship home to Portsmouth.

815 Naval Air Squadron's two Lynx which supported the icebreaker throughout the deployment joined in the festivities as the ship returned, flying over the gateway to Portsmouth Harbour.

The extended spell around the frozen continent allowed Endurance's sonars and sensors to scan and

record data from nearly 6,000 square miles of seabed. The ship also came to the rescue of a stricken cruise liner which ran aground, helped the Beeb record some stunning wildlife footage for a forthcoming documentary, collected information on the fur seal population of South Georgia, transported Princess Anne to British Antarctic Survey sites, assisted islanders in Tristan da Cunha and villagers in Ghana (see page 18) and, finally, appeared on Sky Sports' *Soccer AM* show thanks to a rather amusing (and cold) game of football in the South Shetlands.

'Dad' said his team had "worked extremely hard and been a credit to the Royal Navy"... something the good folk of Pompey have acknowledged.

Already affiliated with the Red Plum, the city conferred

its highest civic honour, Freedom of Portsmouth, upon the Red Plum shortly after her return.

The city's mayor Cllr Mike Blake presented the freedom scroll before the sailors marched through the city centre led by the Band of HM Royal Marines.

This year's spell around Antarctica was the longest deployment in Endurance's 16 years under the White Ensign. Next winter's trip south will be even longer; Endurance will not see Portsmouth again for 18 months when she departs in the autumn.

Picture: LA(Phot) Emz Tucker, FRPU Whale Island



An Audacious beginning

THE SILENT Service will get at least one more Astute-class submarine with an order placed for HMS Audacious.

Whitehall has paid defence giant BAE Systems £200m to start work on Audacious, which will begin to take shape later this year in the firm's huge ship hall at its Barrow-in-Furness yard.

The contract with BAE will cover initial construction work on Audacious until March next year. The MOD and BAE are in talks over the remainder of the contract – Astute alone has cost more than £1bn – which is due to be signed later next year.

HM Submarines Ambush and Artful are also rapidly taking shape in Barrow.

All four Astutes will be equipped with Spearfish torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles – they will carry more of each weapon than the Swiftsure or Trafalgar-class boats they replace – and be the stealthiest submarines the RN has sent to sea. On a personal level, all 98 crew will have their own beds, bringing an end to a century of 'hot bunking'.

Audacious takes her name from a 74-gun third-rate which served under Nelson, a Victorian ironclad which served on the China Station and, perhaps most famously, a Great War dreadnought which fell victim to a mine off Northern Ireland in October 1914.

The Admiralty tried to hush up the battleship's loss – an impossible task as her sinking was witnessed by passengers of the RMS Olympic, sister of the Titanic.

See our supplement for a feature on Astute's launch

Ledbury goes Dutch

FISH not underwater explosives have dominated the recent activities of minelayer HMS Ledbury, currently ensuring trawlermen abide by the rules.

The Portsmouth-based Hunt-class warship has focused her efforts this spring in waters from the Thames Estuary to the Tyne and as far east as the Dogger Bank.

A web of information assists Ledbury (and other fishery protection vessels) in their sweeps of European waters.

The Marine Fisheries Agency e-mails regular updates of the locations of vessels, whilst the agency's spotter aircraft radios updates to ships on patrol.

If a vessel is suspected of breaking the rules, or if it has not been inspected by an RN team for a while, a boarding party will investigate.

And so it was that a team from Ledbury found themselves aboard the French trawler *Tigers II* off Flamborough Head.

The boarding party discovered numerous infringements of net rules and rather than issue the skipper with a stern warning, decided to detain the vessel.

Tigers II was escorted into Grimsby where her captain faced the magistrates and received a hefty fine for breaking fishing laws.

It's not been all fish for Ledbury. There's been beer as well. Well, beer for some and not for others, as a barbecue aboard also involved a game of 'beer or no beer', a quiz rather loosely based on Noel Edmonds' TV game show *Deal or No Deal* (and fronted on Ledbury by a Noel lookalike, so we're told).

There was probably beer too on a visit to Den Helder in Holland, which for many members of the ship's company provided the opportunity to visit Amsterdam which was, in good RN euphemisms, "an interesting and unique run ashore".

And despite currently being attached to the fishery protection unit, Ledbury hasn't forgotten her roots as a warship. She practised her battle skills with a gunnery exercise off the Isle of Wight.

America calling

ORDINARILY, you don't want birds on your flight deck; they tend to play havoc with rotors and engines.

The Wild Geese, however, were welcomed with open arms by the men and women of HMS Ocean as she prowled the Caribbean for drug-runners.

The US Marine Corps' HMM 774 Squadron – The Wild Geese – dropped in with their CH46 Sea Knights for two weeks of training with the RN's largest warship.

A sort of small maritime version of the Chinook, the Sea Knight has been in service with the US military since the 1960s.

The Wild Geese joined Ocean – or the 'Mighty O' as her crew are calling her now (a new one on us – Ed) – to test the ability of the US Marine Corps to work with Britain's amphibious forces.

And on a more personal level, it gave the US marines an opportunity to get to know some of their British counterparts... as well as Ocean's sailors.

The Sea Knights took part in numerous exercises with Ocean's 700M NAS Merlins and 854 NAS Sea Kings, and the twin-rotored birds became a regular sight as they flew circuits around the assault ship's flight deck.

"The Wild Geese's time aboard was hugely successful and proved the ability of British warships to quickly embark and assimilate aircraft from the US Marine Corps," said Ocean's CO Capt Russ Harding.

"Our deployment to the Caribbean is showing all the benefits of teamwork, and this has been another gleaming example.



"A warm welcome awaits the Wild Geese the next time they make their nest in Ocean."

And while Americans have been embarking on Ocean, Brits have been disembarking in America.

A 700M Merlin headed to US Naval Air Station Patuxent River (better known to Americans as Pax River) to show itself off to military and civilian dignitaries, including Dr Delores Etter, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, who was treated to a flight in the whirlybird with her entourage.

A variant of the Merlin will serve as the next presidential helicopter (Marine One) so there is considerable interest across the Pond in the helicopter and what it can do.

With the dignitaries suitably wowed, the nitty gritty of the visit to Washington began with the Merlin crews chatting to US Navy and Presidential Flight fliers about tactics and features of the aircraft to look out for when it enters service with the USMC from next year.

No visit to the US capital would be complete without some sightseeing.

The 700 fliers were given permission to use Washington DC's helicopter routes to set down their aircraft outside the Pentagon, before flying on to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, home of Air Force One, and where a Merlin in presidential dark blue and white will become a regular sight in coming years as it ferries America's leader to and from the Whitehouse.



● A Merlin of 700M NAS prepares to touch down outside the Pentagon

Floating Bulwark of the island

LANDING assault ship HMS Bulwark is back at sea after nine months out of action undergoing a revamp in Devonport.

News from Bulwark has been relatively quiet since she came back from the Gulf and Mediterranean last summer, but that's because an army of workers has been swarming over her.

The shipwrights and electricians have overhauled all the ship's landing craft, fitted a new gantry crane to move kit and ammunition around swiftly in her dock, enhanced her high-voltage electric propulsion system and generally given Bulwark a makeover.



"The success of this complicated and demanding work has been as a direct result of a lot of hard work by a wide range of people," said CO Capt Jeremy Blunden.

"It's good to be able to take Bulwark to sea for the first time."

Now she's back at sea, the team from FOST are keen to see what the ship's company is made of; Operational Sea Training is lined up for Bulwark in September.

Before then, however, there's a visit to Newcastle to look forward to, catching with affiliates in the nearby County of Durham.



● Sadly for LA Margerison, no-one wanted to join in his Mexican Wave... A Sea Knight prepares to touch down on Ocean's flight deck
Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Ocean

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Albion's tsar turn

YOU might remember the scene from *Apollo 13*.

With his advisors telling him the stricken spacecraft will run out of oxygen or its batteries will expire long before the astronauts reach the sanctuary of Earth, flight director Gene Kranz dismisses their protestations with a rallying cry: 'Failure is not an option.'

So when the port guide for St Petersburg told the bridge team of Britain's amphibious flagship they would never squeeze the 18,500 tonne vessel into the historic city of Peter the Great, they took it not as an admonition but as a challenge.

But how do you sail HMS Albion into the heart of St Petersburg?

Very carefully.

And backwards.

The 176-metre (578ft) ship arrived at Lt Schmidt Pier in the centre of the 'Venice of the North' having turned around with inches to spare at either side of the River Nevsky.

Albion is the largest foreign warship to visit St Petersburg – and the Russians made a suitable fuss of her accordingly.

"It was clear from the moment that you turned into the Bolshaya Neva, filling the field of view across the river, that Albion's visit to St Petersburg was going to have a significant impact," said Capt Gary Newton, Britain's Naval Attaché in Moscow.

A military band serenaded the assault ship as she berthed with Heart of Oak and once safely alongside 40 media swarmed aboard, drawn, in part, by the presence of Britain's Ambassador to Russia, Anthony Brenton. (Albion's visit coincided with the Foreign Office's request for the extradition of a suspect in connection with the poisoning of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko.)

Among other dignitaries hosted by Albion during her stay was The Iron Lady, not Mrs T, but Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St Petersburg, who happens to share a sobriquet with the former British premier.

While the media were drawn to the visit of bigwigs, Albion's ship's company (well, the male contingent) were strangely drawn to Russian actress Liza Boyarskaya (she appeared *inter alia* in *Downfall*, the film about the last days of Hitler which was made in St Petersburg).

The actress was onboard for a fashion shoot by the Russian edition of *Vogue* magazine (it won't appear until the November edition) and was escorted by Royal Marines and sailors throughout her stay; she responded to Albion's hospitality by providing the volunteers with front-row seats at her production of *King Lear*.

On a more sombre note, sailors paid their respects at Piskarovskoye Cemetery, under the ever-watchful eye of Mother Russia.

More than half a million victims of the siege of Leningrad – as the city was known under Soviet rule – are buried in huge mass graves (each one contains 10,000 dead).

Albion paraded an unarmed ten-man guard in a ceremony of remembrance attended by the ship's CO Capt Tim Lowe, Mr Brenton and Capt Newton.

Similarly humbling was a visit to a special needs school in the city, where 20 sailors volunteered to fit equipment in a new gymnasium and generally giving the building a fresh look.

As a 'thank you', pupils performed a short concert and presented the sailors were various pictures they had produced.

"We all left wishing that we had had longer to get more done for them," said POLOGS(CS) Hasler.

"What the children did for us far outweighed what we were able to do for them."

That charitable work brought the curtain down on Albion's three-day stay on the Nevsky.

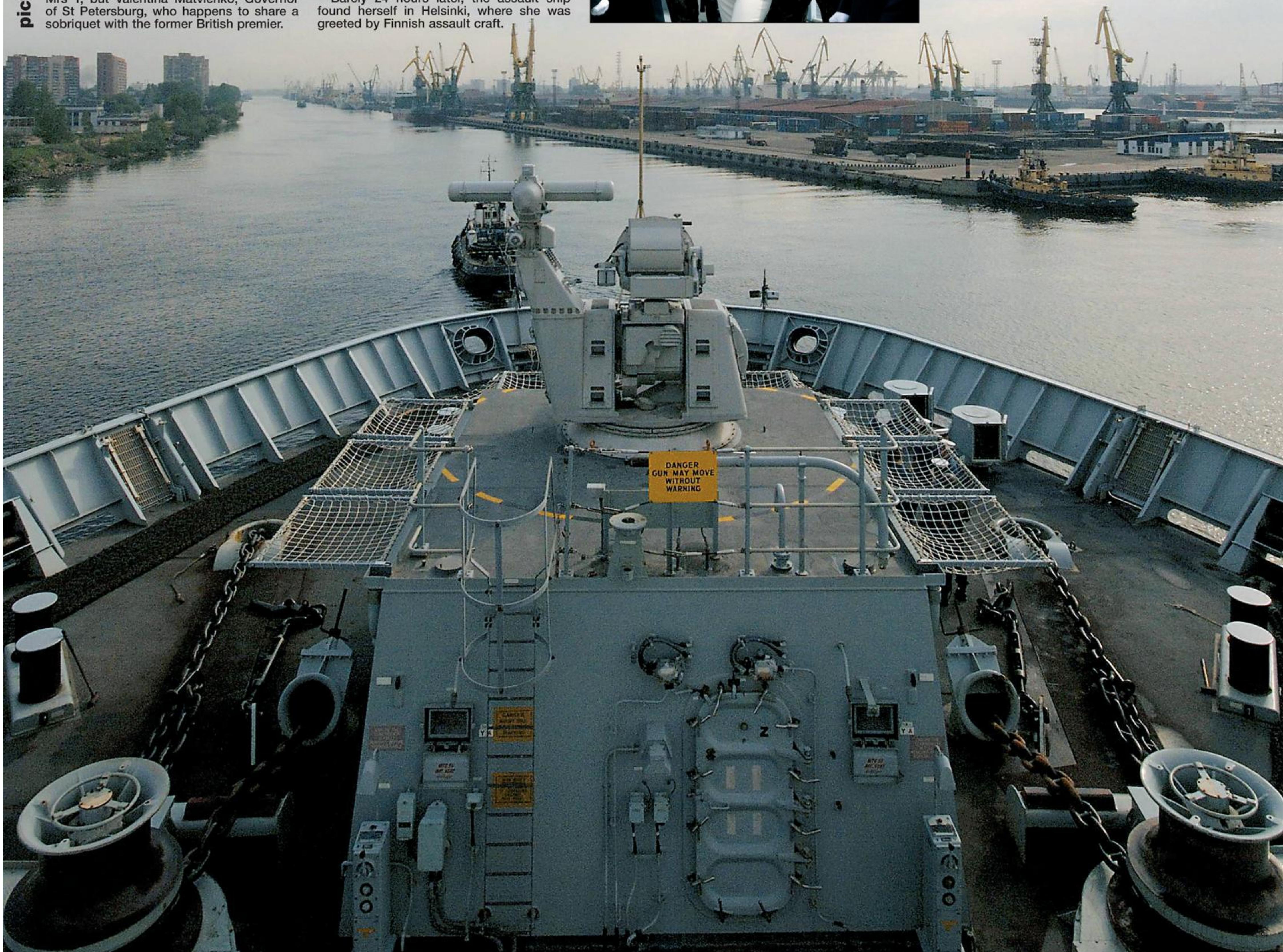
Barely 24 hours later, the assault ship found herself in Helsinki, where she was greeted by Finnish assault craft.



● Albion alongside at Lt Schmidt pier in central St Petersburg and (right) Albion's sailors pay their respects at a ceremony honouring the city's WW2 dead

● Tsargazers... (Below) Russian actress Liza Boyarskaya draws admiring looks from sailors and Royals during a photoshoot for *Vogue*

● (Main picture) Tugs guide Albion past St Petersburg's dockland towards the heart of the famous city





● Big name star: HMS Astute sits on the ship lift in front of the Devonshire Dock Hall in Barrow-in-Furness

Picture: CPO(Phot) Colin Burden

Super striker finally unveiled

NO ONE arriving in Barrow-in-Furness on a sunny Friday early last month could be in any doubt as to the main item on the town's agenda.

A glance south, towards the BAE Systems shipyard, supplied the answer in capital letters 30 metres high.

ASTUTE – one letter on each of the 60-metre high sections of the Devonshire Dock Hall – announced the imminent arrival of the latest Barrow boat – number 310 in a line stretching back more than a century.

Ambush and Artful, at six letters apiece, look good for the same treatment, although one wonders how they will cope with Audacious, the fourth of class which was confirmed as an order just days before Astute was rolled out.

Glorious weather brought out a good crowd – an estimated 10,000 people were either invited as guests or watched from various



vantage points along the dock or on the Michaelson Road bridge.

A Navy Merlin helicopter provided pre-launch entertainment until the guest of honour arrived at the yard, with Lt Cdr Greg Hamilton acting as MC.

The Duchess of Cornwall was escorted into the Devonshire Dock Hall where she had the chance to see an exhibition of work by schools.

Then it was time for the reveal. The doors of the hall were opened, and the crowds on the dockside caught their first glimpse of Astute, her blunt nose initially obscured by lengths of black material.

Before the ceremony, the Duchess met another Astute.

The submarine's badge (left) features a retriever carrying a bird in its mouth, and to mark the occasion BAE Systems has sponsored a guide dog puppy which is undergoing training.

And young Astute, a black labrador, won the hearts of onlookers as he greeted the Duchess – and refused to leave the dais without a struggle.

The submarine was blessed by the Bishop of Carlisle, the Rt Rev Graham Dow, then came the moment of truth.

Reminding everybody that she was married to an admiral, the Duchess of Cornwall spoke the time-honoured words to launch the boat – although tradition dictates a rather humbler brew than champagne is used.

Instead, Astute was welcomed with a bottle of beer brewed by a family member of one of the crew.

Within minutes, as lights flashed along the flanks, a train of 52 railway cars had started to roll gently forward, carrying the 7,800 tonne vessel out of the hall and on to the mighty ship lift.

The Duchess of Cornwall, by now wearing a lapel badge proffered her by BAE Systems Submarine Solutions Managing Director Murray Easton which stated she was "Proud to have helped build Astute", met some of the onlookers, then returned to the welcome shade of the cavernous shed and on to lunch with various dignitaries, including First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band.

The Royal Navy's senior officer said he was delighted that the powerful vessel had edged a step closer to joining the Fleet.

"It is a huge tribute to Murray Easton and his whole team that they have turned the whole project around," said Admiral Band.

"This is a really serious submarine."

"If you want to be in the Premiership you need a Premiership-quality striker."

"This is the Navy's Wayne Rooney..."

More on Astute in the Submarine Town supplement

New system provides cutting-edge cover

SUBMARINES will receive cutting-edge detection and early-warning systems better suited to their 21st-Century roles.

The MOD is investing £21m in 14 RESM – Radar Electronic Support Measures – systems for Vanguard, Trafalgar, and Astute-class submarines to help safeguard them against surface and air attacks.

RESM systems perform three distinct functions: to provide early warning of aircraft looking for submarines when at periscope depth; compiling a picture of air and sea forces in the vicinity of a boat – plus any land-based radar systems; recording electronic intelligence which can be processed back in the UK.

The existing electronic radar systems date back to the 1980s and with Britain's fleet submarines operating increasingly in the littoral environment – relatively close to shore – the MOD asked the world's defence firms to come up with an updated solution.

Thales Aerospace Division UK (which includes Electronic Combat Systems) beat competition from numerous companies, including Lockheed Martin and QinetiQ, to provide the improved electronic wizardry.

All four ballistic nuclear missile boats, four Trafalgar-class submarines and all four Astute boats will receive the upgrades over the next three-four years. Existing antennae will remain on the vessels, but processors and consoles inside the boats will be replaced.

Shore-side systems will also be installed for training and test purposes.

"The existing technology is about 20 years old, and with combat operations more and more in the littoral, it's a greater challenge," said Kevin Swales, business unit director for Electronic Combat Systems at Thales.

"This is the best system there is – 21st-Century, state-of-the-art. It's a significant upgrade in technology."



● Evening falls as Astute waits to be lowered into the water at Barrow

Picture: LA(Phot) JJ Massey

Merlin-Sea King sucker punch

THE combination of Sea King and Merlin on anti-drugs operations in the Caribbean is proving its value – and bodes well for similar missions in the future.

Ocean snared £28m of cocaine, as we reported last month, thanks to the efforts of a 'bagger' Sea King of 854 NAS with its airborne surveillance and control kit, and a Merlin of 700M NAS, which pounced on the drug runners as they tried to haul bales of narcotics from the water.

What we didn't tell you was how the two aircraft worked in tandem, thanks to hi-tech camera kit being evaluated by experts from the RN's Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood.

The Merlin was fitted with an MX15 'Wescam', an EO – electro-optical – camera, which provides its crew with images irrespective of day, night or weather.

The radar of the bagger Sea King picked up a slow-moving aircraft, thought to be carrying drugs, passing on the details to the Merlin.

Thanks to the camera kit, it tracked the suspicious airplane visually in the dark, then tracked the bales as they were dropped into the sea for a waiting boat – and onward distribution.

"We know that this combination of Sea King and Merlin is really effective," said the MWC's Cdr Malcolm Pollock, in charge of developing aviation tactics and operations.

The trials with the camera in the Caribbean is just one strand of work by the MWC team in the art of airborne surveillance.

Baggers of 857 NAS in the Indian Ocean are working in conjunction with American Scan Eagle robot aircraft (UAVs – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) in support of maritime security operations.

The work with the American drones, launched from the assault ship USS Carter Hall (pictured below), mirrors the work the MWC did with a robot plane off Scotland with HMS Sutherland 18 months ago.

Those trials could bear fruit in the near future with the very real possibility of a British warship deploying with a UAV aboard, possibly a mini helicopter or a strange-looking aircraft which parachutes into the sea at the end of its mission.

"I think the exciting thing about UAVs is that they can give you long-term possibilities – they can be up for hours on end, unlike a ship's helicopter," said Cdr Pollock.

Even more enticing is the thought of major strike carrier operations launched from a British conventional flat-top, a dream which will become reality in the next decade.

Over the past year HMS Illustrious has been working hard on strike mission planning to pave the way for HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales and their Joint Strike Fighter aircraft.

That work is continuing apace in 2007 with exercises with Naval Harriers aboard Lusty this spring in UK waters and the Baltic, and later with US Marine Corps AV8 Harriers joining the ship when she visits the USA, and towards the year's end Spanish AV8s will land on board.

Assisting the RN in re-learning the art of carrier strike is US Navy pilot Lt Cdr José 'Manny' De La Fuente, a veteran of combat missions in a F18 jets operating from American flat-tops who is part of the MWC's carrier strike team.

He's observing the way the RN and RAF conduct fast jet operations from Lusty, as well as providing vital input and liaison for the British ship's visit to the USA.



● Do you hear there: Does anyone know why the ship has turned black and white but the White Ensign is still in glorious Technicolour?... HMS Shoreham's CO Lt Cdr Nick Borbone and his bridge team bring the ship alongside HMS Hurworth in Erdek, Turkey

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, FRPU Whale Island

Orion goes hunting

IN KEEPING with the mythical 'patron' of their deployment, the ships of the Orion task force have been hunting mines in earnest.

The RN has dispatched five vessels to the Mediterranean and Black Sea for a four-month deployment: Sandown-class ships HMS Walney and Shoreham, Hunts HMS Atherstone and Hurworth and 'mother ship' RFA Cardigan Bay.

Orion has cast its net wide, from La Spezia in north-west Italy to the Turkish naval base of Erdek in the Sea of Marmara.

The first major test for the Orion group came off Patras in Greece with Exercise Ariadne, a large-scale hunt for mines involving naval forces from Belgium, Spain, Germany, Greece and Turkey off the Peloponnese coast.

The Hellenic Navy kindly laid plenty of dummy mines for the Allied warships to find – which some did.

Atherstone's sonar picked up a buoyant mine – similar to the WW2 tethered ones – and the

Crazy A was ordered to investigate and haul the mock explosive out of the sea.

"A mine find does wonders for the ship's company's morale – especially when we are able to return to harbour with the fruits of our labours on the sweep deck," said Lt Cdr Guy Dale-Smith, Atherstone's CO.

Just to add to the excitement of Ariadne, if mines were not enough to contend with, enemy air power was thrown into the mix, with the task group attacked by helicopters and fast jets.

Air attack for a Hunt or Sandown is daunting; there's not a great deal you can do with little more than machine-guns for defence and a top speed of 15kts (or just 13kts for the Sandowns).

The quartet of minehunters parted company with Cardigan Bay for passage to Piraeus.

'Mother' had to sail around the tip of the Peloponnese, while the four smaller ships squeezed through the Corinth Canal to Athens' great port.

Piraeus is just 20 minutes' away from the Greek capital by metro, so it was on to the train to sample sights old (the Acropolis

and original Olympic stadium) and new (night life and the 2004 Olympic stadium).

The five ships pooled their sporting talent to form Team Orion for a rugby match with an ex-pat/Greek side, Athenian Springboks.

It looked bad for the scratch RN side who were down 21-0 within the first ten minutes. They fought back however and eventually won the tie 27-21.

Upon leaving Piraeus, Orion split again. Atherstone made for Souda Bay in Crete, while the rest of the group sailed through the Dardanelles and into Erdek.

Souda is home to NATO's FORACS range, ideal for giving Atherstone's sensitive sonars and weapons systems a 'health check'; that health check, you'll be pleased to read, was glowing.

As for the Turkish element of Orion, the four ships spent a week off Erdek working with the Turks on a mix of exercises involving gunnery, minehunting and defence against fast inshore attack craft before taking a break in the base of Erdek.

The force is currently making its way around the Black Sea.



● Three's company... Alongside in Erdek are (l-r) HM Ships Walney, Shoreham and Hurworth

Bayleaf keeps 'em running

QUESTION: what does it take to sustain large-scale operations in the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean?

Answer: RFA Bayleaf, of course.

For pretty much every movement by a Royal Navy warship east of Suez, as well as numerous Allied vessels in the region, relies on the fuel provided by the veteran tanker.

Indeed, apart from the clutch of British vessels passing in and out of theatre, ships from the USA, Australia, France, Pakistan and Germany have guzzled Bayleaf's gas.

The biggest guzzler was USS Boxer, a 40,000-ton helicopter carrier and assault ship, which took 2,400 tonnes of fuel on board (minehunters HMS Blyth and Ramsey, by contrast, needed a mere 24 tonnes to maintain them when they replenished-at-sea with the auxiliary).

Not all the time at sea is spent refuelling Allied vessels.

In between RASING there are regular exercises to keep Bayleaf on her toes – fire-fighting drills, weapons training, dummies overboard to rescue, imaginary breakdowns.

Gunnery instructors from Flag Officer Sea Training have also been on board to test the aptitude of the RFA men and women at blasting targets out of the water by day or night using the Mini Gun, 20mm and General-Purpose Machine guns.

"The evening shoot was quite spectacular with a paper sack target covered in multi-coloured luminous liquid looking like a well-lit Christmas tree," said 3/O Tanya Warner.

"On completion of the weapons team's shoot, a few rounds were left in the Mini Gun and – under the watchful gaze of the FOST instructor – I was able to shoot at the target. 'Wow!' is all I can say."

And a trip to the Gulf is not complete without a visit to the ski slopes, for not all Bayleaf's deployment is spent at sea.

The tanker has called in at Jebel Ali and Dubai to give her ship's company a breather and to swap sailors.

Dubai especially has numerous delights, not least the world's largest indoor snowdrome. As a result, the ship is slowly building a fledgling ski and snowboard team.

Raleigh's gate is opened

MEMBERS of the public will be able to look around HMS Raleigh in Torpoint when it opens its gates to visitors on Wednesday August 1.

Entry to the open day, between 10am and 3pm, is free and will give the public a chance to see how civvies are transformed into sailors in just eight weeks during basic entry training.

There will also be a variety of interactive displays including a chance to experience open-air dining in the shape of a field kitchen and to take a close look at the Navy's latest Rigid Inflatable Boat, the Pacific 24, which came into service last year.

Also on show will be the base's fire-fighting facilities and the DRIU ship simulator where sailors learn how to patch up a damaged warship.

Raleigh does much more than train rookie sailors, however. It is also home to the RN Submarine School which will be open to visitors, who will be able to listen in on sonar training, try their hand at Morse code, tour the heritage area which celebrates the Silent Service's illustrious history, and see a Tomahawk cruise missile which was fired by HMS Trafalgar on trials six years ago.

"The open day is about raising awareness of what we do at HMS Raleigh, raising awareness of the quality of our people and the excellent training we provide," said Raleigh's Commanding Officer Cdre John Keegan.

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'One bad day in our proud history'

FAILURES of command, failures of intelligence, failures of training and failures of media handling all conspired against 15 sailors and Royal Marines from HMS Cornwall who were seized by Iran.

Two official reports into the capture of the frigate's boarding party – and the subsequent media furore upon the personnel's release – say there were “shortcomings” and “a collective failure of judgment”, but that no one individual person was at fault.

Defence Secretary Des Browne asked Royal Marine Lt Gen Sir Rob Fulton to look at the operational reasons why the 15 had been taken by Iran – and how such an incident could be prevented in the future.

And he called in former senior BBC journalist Tony Hall to look at the way the RN and MOD dealt with the media when the sailors and marines returned to the UK a fortnight after their capture; the decision to allow the captives to sell their stories to newspapers and TV coverage drew widespread condemnation.

Of Gen Fulton's report, Mr Browne told Parliament it found no matériel failures: HMS Cornwall's boarding party had the right kit for the job.

But the general said there were numerous shortcomings and failings both by British and Coalition forces in the Gulf.

Mr Browne told fellow MPs: “The events of March 23 were not the result of a single gross failing or individual error, but the coming together of a series of vulnerabilities – many relatively small when viewed in isolation, but which together placed our personnel in a position that could be exploited by Iran.”

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir

Jonathon Band agreed with Gen Fulton's findings and stressed that his recommendations were already being acted upon.

“Our operational focus and preparedness on the day were found wanting,” he added.

“This was due to the unfortunate accumulation of many factors, not because of any single failure or any particular individual's human error.”

“I intend to meet in full my responsibilities for the fighting effectiveness, ethos, morale, reputation and image of the Royal Navy and we will act robustly to address the findings of the inquiry. I can assure you that action plans are already in place.”

As for the media furore which rather overshadowed the captives' seizure by Iran in the first place, the lengthy report by Mr Hall is critical of the Senior Service's and MOD's publicity machine – but it also highlights the (at times unscrupulous) actions of the Fourth Estate.

Mr Hall said he could find no one person either in the RN or in Whitehall who had allowed sailors to receive money from newspapers for their stories.

“This was a collective failure of judgment – or an abstention from judgment – rather than a failure by any one individual,” he added.

“Many people were consulted or involved, but very few took a clear view, and nobody clearly took control of the issue. Many people could have said ‘no’, and nobody did.”

That failure to say ‘no’, however, provoke widespread dismay among the public, veterans and politicians and harmed the standing of Britain's Armed Forces.

“The acceptance of payments from the media offended the public and their view of the special place of the Armed Forces in British life,” Mr Hall continued.

“It also ran contrary to what the

Armed Forces believe they stand for: the team versus the individual, and selfless service on behalf of the nation. That the decision to accept payment caused such anger and concern was entirely understandable.”

Mr Browne said first and foremost, no Service personnel would be allowed to sell their stories to the media in future.

But back in April the decision to accept payment was seen by many people in the Navy and MOD's PR departments as a *fait accompli* given the intense media interest in the story – “a tsunami of media coverage”.

The families of the 15 captured personnel faced a barrage from reporters: constant phone calls, questioning on their doorsteps, ‘media camps’ set up in their streets.

Mr Hall said newspapers quickly began to offer money to the families of LS Faye Turney, the only woman captured, and OM Arthur Batchelor, the youngest member of the boarding party, for their stories.

“Many of the families felt overwhelmed by the pressure of the media,” said Mr Hall, and although the RN and Whitehall provided ‘media shielders’, none had been involved with a story of such magnitude before.

Having been thrust unwillingly on to Iranian TV, many of the captives were keen to put their side of the story – something which the RN was also keen for them to do on their release.

Mr Hall said the press conference arranged on the 15's return to the UK on Good Friday was too hastily organised and the fact that LS Turney was not present was a mistake.



● Back on patrol... Royal Marines attached to Task Force 158 and the boarding team return to HMS Cornwall at the end of a day of training on-board RFA Sir Bedivere

Picture: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann, FRPU Whale Island

The former BBC man added that had the leading hand been at the press conference at RM Chivenor and told her story along with her comrades, media interest in the story – and the hounding of families by reporters – would probably have rapidly subsided.

The report states that press conferences are “a good option” but much more thought must go into them: personnel must be thoroughly debriefed and support for them and their families adequately provided before being thrust into the full glare of publicity.

Mr Hall's report also warns that the military will find it difficult adapting to a world of 24-hour rolling news, not least where the emphasis is very much on individual ‘human interest’ stories, instead of much more in-depth, serious, researched articles and news features.

Not least, the senior journalist said, there was a rift between Whitehall and Fleet Street.

“There has been a decline of trust and a worsening of the relationship – in part because of the controversial nature of the continuing UK presence in Iraq,” Mr Hall added.

“It is vitally important to get the relationship between the MOD and Armed Forces and the media right and, despite inevitable ups and downs, to preserve and build the hard won reputation of the Armed Forces. They deserve no less.”

Admiral Band stressed that all sailors and Royal Marines should continue to take heart from their daily achievements and daily professionalism.

“The events of March 23 were one bad day in our proud 400-year history,” he added.

“This incident was a significant blow to our reputation, but it must not be seen as a permanent blemish.”

“As Winston Churchill said: ‘Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.’”

Lt Gen Fulton's report remains classified as it affects operational procedures. But the general's key comments and recommendations as outlined by Defence Secretary Des Browne to Parliament were:

- the Royal Navy and Ministry of Defence must improve their ability to identify and assess risks in a complex environment such as the northern Gulf and train their men and women accordingly;

- generic training for Royal Navy warships deploying is “world-class” but specialist boarding parties – rather than mixed parties of Royal Marines and personnel from a ship's company – should conduct board and search operations in future;

- improvements are needed in handling intelligence, communications, doctrine and collective and individual training before deploying to the Gulf.

Tony Hall's 26-page report on the media handling aspects of the crisis is not classified; it has been published and can be found on the internet at news.mod.uk



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The OKX factor

NORMALLY we don't encourage exploitation.

But if it's for the good of the Royal Navy, we're all for it.

The team at the Maritime Warfare Centre – the brains trust which develops and teaches the art of operational thinking and working – wants to tap into some of the things which makes the Fleet, Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines tick so they can share that expertise across the entire Senior Service where relevant.

Operational Knowledge Exploitation or OKX allows the experts at the MWC to, er, exploit operational knowledge.

In simple terms that means taking up some of the ideas and practices a ship, squadron or unit uses in the front line and passing them on to the rest of the RN.

"It may seem obvious to a lot of people – but it's only obvious when someone actually points it out. Little things can make a difference and we do pass the ideas on," said Cdr Malcolm Pollock, overseeing ways of improving front-line FAA tactics.

The nuggets the MWC team are looking for are less about the big picture, but the little things which make a difference to the effectiveness of a unit – and thus impact on the big picture.

And talking of pictures... the experiences of one flight team with a digital camera have been shared with the rest of the FAA.

Rather than peer at the small screen on the back of digital camera to examine an image, one flight crew downloaded it on to a large 'tablet' screen for improved viewing, an idea which is now being suggested to fellow fliers.

"We're all in this together, whether it's submitting lessons or providing feedback on a new way of hunting a submarine. That contribution will go a long way to improving the life of you and your 'oppo'," explained Capt Tom Karsten, director of the MWC, based at HMS Collingwood.

"The value of exploiting and sharing operational experience more quickly will keep us ahead of the game."

The MWC has a team more than 130 strong – it recently co-located its former homes at Portsdown Hill and Southwick Park under a single roof in Collingwood – working on every aspect of RN/RM operations.

OKX suggestions should be sent to the MWC c/o Marlborough Building, HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham, PO14 1AS or on e-mail via Navy Star to Cdr Martin Ewence, overseeing the initiative.

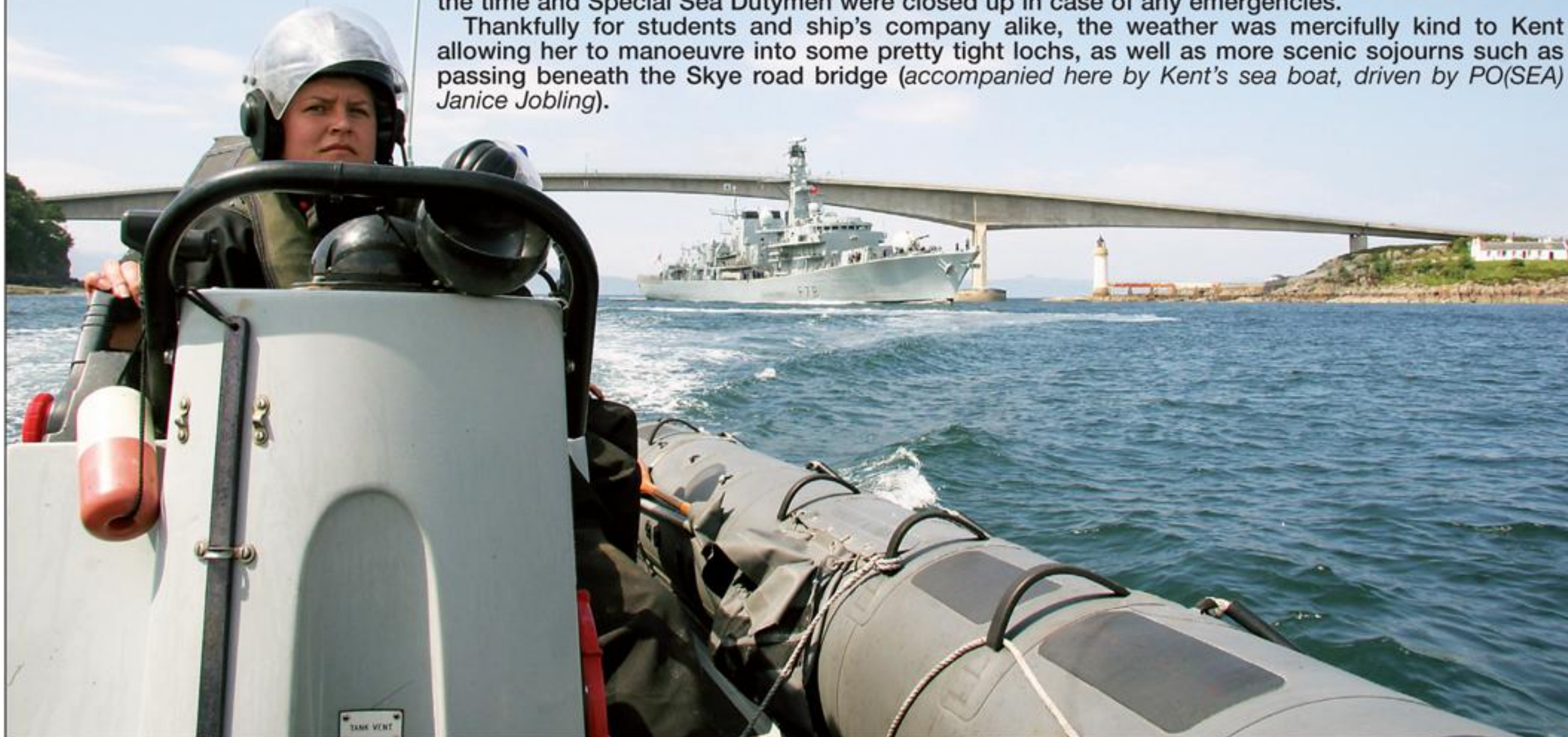
Skye-ful hours for Kent

THE not-so-familiar surroundings of the Scottish Isles have been home to the good ship Kent as she hosted eight officers undergoing specialist navigation training.

Two weeks of intensive instruction and manoeuvres were lined up, with the students assessed on their ability to conduct high-speed runs close to land, anchoring by night and other challenging scenarios.

Given the fairly dangerous nature of the training, the frigate's navigational team were on hand all the time and Special Sea Dutymen were closed up in case of any emergencies.

Thankfully for students and ship's company alike, the weather was mercifully kind to Kent allowing her to manoeuvre into some pretty tight lochs, as well as more scenic sojourns such as passing beneath the Skye road bridge (accompanied here by Kent's sea boat, driven by PO(SEA) Janice Jobling).



From logs to blogs

STARDATE 2105.07. HMS Somerset. Off Portland. *I won't forget today in a hurry – it was the moment I'd been looking forward to since taking command.*

Don't worry, we haven't gone all *Star Trek* on you (pew – Ed). It's just an extract from the diary of Cdr Rob Wilson, Commanding Officer of HMS Somerset, who is recounting the trials and tribulations of bringing the frigate out of refit in an internet diary or 'blog'.

Each vessel in the Senior Service has its own website, featuring news on recent episodes in the ship's life.

But with web access across the Fleet becoming easier, personal diaries are likely to form an increasing part of life at sea, giving sailors a chance to air their stories, rather than relying on the media to highlight (or, sadly, often ignore) what the RN is doing.

Sailors on HMS Lancaster blogged their way around the Caribbean during the winter and HMS Albion has just begun one charting her work on Neptune Warrior exercises and her NATO deployment to the Baltic.

Cdr Wilson's is probably the most comprehensive blog yet set up by a serving sailor, with almost daily updates on the goings on

aboard the Devonport-based frigate.

Alongside the highs of command – letting rip with the 4.5in main gun when "our steel box had become a warship" and approving promotions – he charts some of the lows: such as having to hand over five sailors to another ship deploying to the Gulf to fill gaps aboard.

"No matelot likes to have his life re-arranged at short notice, but there is no option and no resistance for it is the right decision," Cdr Wilson writes.

"The bottom line is that our country is heavily committed to two major military campaigns. Whilst the Navy appears infrequently in the headlines, our support to those campaigns is huge."

And there's the small matter of a "crunch", clipping the dock wall in Devonport as Cdr Wilson brought his ship in which resulted in a small dent in the corner of the quarterdeck.

"I can tell you that the moment of impact, no matter how slight, is a sight and sound that I am not likely ever to forget," he says.

"Whilst bumping one's shiny new ship on first berthing her does no-one's confidence or morale the power of good, there is absolutely nothing to do but put a brave face on it, deal with the fall-out and 'get back on the horse'."

Somerset has only just emerged from refit in Rosyth, where she spent a year receiving new sonar, a flight deck capable of operating Merlin helicopters, and general updates and improvements all round.

COs have the power to authorise blogs by members of their ship's company – providing the diary is not contentious, reflects favourably on life in the Senior Service, and providing the Commanding Officer can maintain oversight of the content.

"New technology is giving us an unprecedented opportunity

to engage directly with the public," said Capt Mark Windsor, head of the Fleet's Media and Communications team.

"Both the First Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Fleet have seen these web logs and are very encouraged."

Commanding Officers looking to start their own blogs or approve diaries compiled by their team should inform Fleet HQ so they can spread the word and keep tabs on any media inquiries which might result from journalists reading the blogs (for they do read them, as regular users of the bulletin board Rum Ration know). Further advice has been provided in a circular on dealing with the media issued by Capt Windsor.

Cdr Wilson's Somerset blog can be viewed at <http://hms-somerset-co.blogspot.com/> and Albion's web diary is at <http://www.blogtoday.co.uk/bloghome.aspx?username=HMSAlbion>.

Steel city rejects Diamond

CIVIC leaders in Sheffield have provoked a furore by turning down an affiliation with a new destroyer.

Councillors do not want to be associated with HMS Diamond, the third of the RN's Type 45 warships which is due for launch later this year.

They say they will only be affiliated with a new HMS Sheffield, nothing more, nothing less...

... which means they will have a long wait, as there will be no Shiny Sheff for at least a decade with all names for major warships already allocated. HMS Sheffield is not among them.

The Yorkshire city had particularly strong ties with its namesake cruiser, the destroyer lost in the Falklands and, most recently, the Type 22 frigate ordered in the wake of the 1982 conflict.

For those reasons civic leaders rejected the offer of an affiliation with Diamond... an affiliation which has now been offered to Coventry, another city with long

and proud links with ships bearing its name.

Six Sheffield MPs, including former Home Secretary David Blunkett, are demanding the Senior Service changes its mind and renames a warship for their city.

But other cities which have had ships named in their honour have already snapped up the chance to be affiliated with the world's most advanced air defence destroyers.

Daring already has burgeoning ties with the city of Birmingham, Newcastle gladly accepted the chance to be associated with Dauntless, and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band told Cardiff's city leaders at a dinner that the Welsh capital would be fittingly associated with HMS Dragon.

As for the ship at the hub of the kerfuffle, she is taking shape at BAE System's Govan yard ahead of her launch this autumn.

Cumberland is half ready

IFYOU are wondering why you've not read about the exploits of Her Majesty's Ship Cumberland these past few months it's because she's in the middle of a refit.

The Type 22 warship has just passed the half-way point of the overhaul in the impressive 'frigate shed' at Devonport.

Shipwrights from DML completed their work on the hull below the waterline in early May, so the ship's company celebrated the milestone with some of the team overseeing the multi-million pound revamp with a rare glimpse at Cumberland's bottom.

With the little celebration over, the party vacated the dock bottom and the sluices were opened.

With undocking completed, the men and women of the Mighty Sausage are gearing up for the next milestone – moving back on board in July.

"It's an exciting time for us as we watch our ship having life breathed into her once more," said Executive Officer Lt Cdr Mike Knott.

"DML have done a fantastic job on the hull and all indications are that she'll return to the Fleet in first-class condition."

This is the second refit for Cumberland in her 20-year life. This latest revamp sees her hull and machinery given some much-appreciated TLC, plus improved satellite communications, water processing plants and a new torpedo defence system.

Battleship grey is green

BRISTLING with weaponry, they might look mean and foreboding but the RN's new Type 45 destroyers are remarkably kind.

Kind to the environment, that is, as the ships have earned their builders praise for some of the eco-friendly methods used in construction.

Six Type 45 anti-air destroyers are on the order books from HMS Daring, nearing completion, to HMS Duncan, ship number six.

BAE Systems, who are building the midships and stern of each vessel as well as fitting them out (the bow and main mast is provided by the VT Group in Portsmouth) has turned to environmentally-friendly paint to give Daring and her sisters that battleship grey sheen.

The firm has used an innovative powder coating for components instead of traditional solvent-based paint, or used water and epoxy-based paints wherever possible.

The result means less paint used across the class – 12,600 litres in all (2,700 gallons), enough to fill more than 5,000 typical household tins, enough to paint a dozen football pitches grey... should you be inclined to do so.

And by using environmentally-friendly paint it means the tins can be recycled rather than dumped in landfill sites. Around 325 tonnes of tins will be re-used.

And to keep the men in the Treasury happy, the switch to 'green' grey will save the taxpayer thousands of pounds.

Fox found in Jebel Ali

SEVEN part-time sailors provided protection for their RFA comrades in the Gulf as part of increasing usage of the Royal Naval Reserve in the front line.

The team, from Bristol RNR unit HMS Flying Fox and HMS Cambria, near Cardiff, flew to Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates – the huge man-made port just outside Dubai – when tanker RFA Bayleaf berthed.

Force protection – safeguarding a ship in port – is typically provided by a ship's company, or in the RFA's case, by green berets.

To ease the burden on full-time personnel, RNR volunteers are being deployed more and more frequently, hence the use of PO Diana Cope's seven-strong squad aboard Bayleaf.

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For more information or to donate on-line visit
www.svronline.org

President sent to the Tower

MORE than 130 sailors marched along the banks of the Thames as the men and women of HMS President turned out for their annual divisions.

The grounds of the Tower of London were the setting for the ceremony, under the watchful eye of its legendary Beefeaters, ravens, Governor of the Tower Major General Keith Cima, and the Flag Officer Reserves, Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt.

The President reservists marched from their headquarters at St Katharine's Dock along the side of the river and into the courtyard of the Tower, or Broadwalk as it's referred to, where they formed up, directed by CPO Jan Evers.

Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt inspected the guard of honour before presenting numerous awards and medals to the Londoners (listed below), including AB Craig Jacobs, named new

entry recruit of the year.

"HMS President put on a great display and were the embodiment of military bearing and etiquette," said the admiral. "Parades such as these not only underline the importance of tradition in the Naval Service, but also show that the Royal Naval Reserve is a disciplined and modern force, capable of carrying out all the tasks asked of them to the highest order."

Honoured were:

The Iraq Medal: Surgeon Lt Cdr D A Wilkinson; 2nd Clasp to the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal: LS C Adams; 1st Clasp to the VRSM: PO Nurse MM A Carroll, PO(MSA) L Hadcocks; VRSM: Lt S J Styles, AB B J Aitchison, AB S D Lambert; The Commander's Cup (for the junior officer who contributed most to the unit): Acting S/Lt J S Francis; Guinness Shield (for individual effort): LS S T Howard; Bernard Bell Trophy (for the rating contributing most to GSSR): AB C J Jones; David Skinner Trophy (for the rating contributing most to shore operations): LS J Fasolino; Logistic Branch Trophy: AB M I Dickson



● LA(AH) Marc Grice instructs aircraft handlers in the art of dealing with a flight deck fire at Culdrose's fire school
Picture: LA(Phot) Carl Osmond, RNAS Culdrose

Culdrose fired up for its 60th

THE MEN and women of HMS Seahawk were celebrating the 60th anniversary of the famous air station as *Navy News* was printed.

Better known to the world as RNAS Culdrose, or simply Culdrose, the air base just outside Helston on Cornwall's Lizard peninsula begins its seventh decade with two days of ceremonies and services.

The 2,000 or so Service personnel were due to form up for ceremonial divisions on June 26 in front of Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, the head of Naval aviation.

The diamond jubilee ceremony was to be followed by a drumhead service, led by the Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven John Green, to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Culdrose personnel since 1947.

On a lighter note, a 60th birthday cake has been baked for the air station, featuring the badge of every squadron to fly from Culdrose.

And that should be a very big cake; in its 60-year history, the airfield has been home to some 30 naval air squadrons.

Presently calling Seahawk home are: 700, 750, 771, 792, 814, 820, 849, 854, 857 NAS, plus the Hawks of FRADU (the Fleet Requirements Air Direction Unit); between them they clocked up 35,000 'movements' on the airfield in 2006.

Aircraft from some of those squadrons were due to fly over Helston on Thursday June 28 while air station personnel marched through the market town to celebrate their freedom of the borough.

Helston, not surprisingly, has close ties with Culdrose; the airfield is the largest employer locally with 1,000 civilians working on the site. The base is thought to pump around £100m into the local economy each year.

And despite the misconception (chiefly at the NN offices - Ed), Culdrose is not constantly fog bound. In fact, according to its weathermen, there's only fog on average one day in every 20.

The best way of all to celebrate any anniversary is, of course, with a beer.

Cornish brewery Skinners has teamed up with Culdrose and

produced two limited edition beers - Falklands 25th and Fleet Air Arm Ale - with 10p from each bottle going to Seafarers UK.

Looking to the present and future... a realistic - and also environmentally-friendly - £1m fire and rescue simulator has just opened.

The fire trainer recreates the intense fire, heat, smoke and chaos of a blaze inside a ship - but in a safe and controlled environment.

The simulator replicates four compartments on one deck, with a hallway and stairwell leading to six more compartments on an upper deck.

Using propane gas to generate flames and heat and vegetable oil smoke generators, sailors get a feel for a real fire situation, but are protected by various safety systems such as emergency lighting, smoke extraction systems, emergency power isolations and extra external escape doors.

The new simulator forms one strand of training at the School of Flight Deck Operations where aircraft handlers are taught not merely the art of moving aircraft and helicopters safely around a flight deck, but preparing for the worst-case scenario.

Moving to oohs and aahs rather than ouches... tickets are now on sale for the air station's Air Day which this year takes place on Wednesday August 1.

Given the 60th anniversary of the air station, many of the aircraft which have flown at Culdrose over its proud history will be putting in appearances including a vintage Skyraider (pictured below), similar to those flown by the Fleet Air Arm in the '50s, a Sea Prince, Sea Fury, Wasp helicopter, and Seafire fighter.

Bringing the air day up to date, a Harrier GR9 flown by the Naval Strike Wing will be dropping in, as will RAF Eurofighter and Tornado jets.

Advanced tickets are priced £12 for adults and £4 for children and are available from www.ticketzone.co.uk, by phone on 08705 321321 or at Cornish tourist information centres.

■ We'll have a report and pictures from the 60th anniversary events in our August edition.



A trawl through the mists of time...

April 17 1947
Commissioned as HMS Seahawk

June 17 1949
First Air Day

May 1952
First rescue in UK by helicopter

September 12 1958
Granting of Freedom of the Borough of Helston

January 1959
Helicopter pilot training at Culdrose begins

December 1964
Airborne Early Warning task re-located to RNAS Brawdy

March 1967
Torrey Canyon disaster

June 1969
Barrack modernisation programme begins

June 1973
Royal Naval Foreign Training Unit formed

February 1978
RAF Sea King Training Unit formed

November 1980
Prince Andrew starts helicopter pilot training

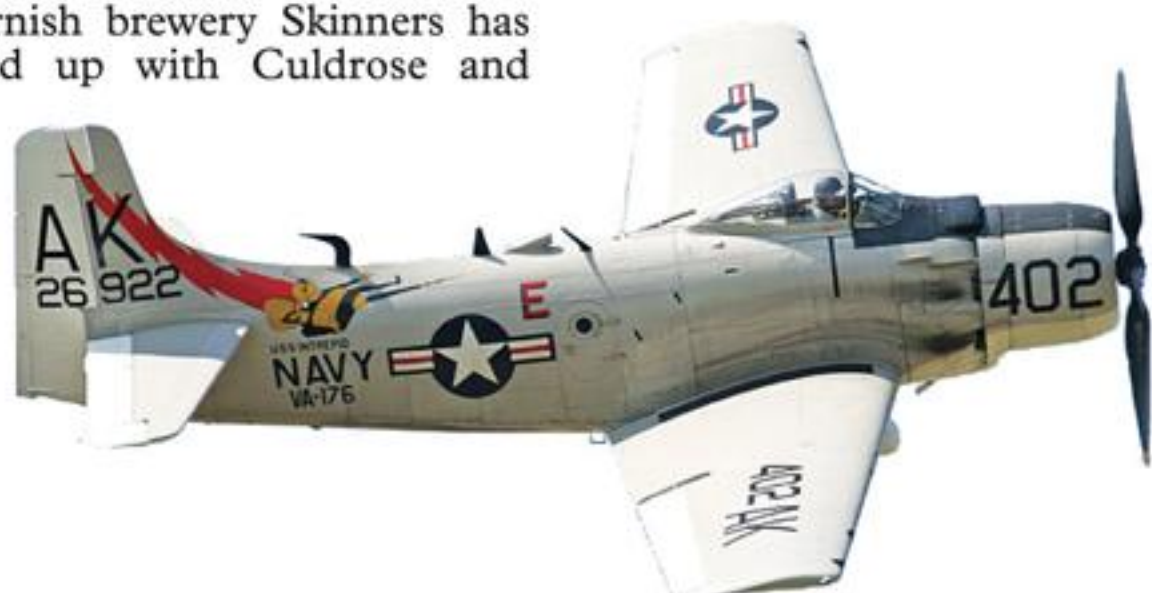
November 1984
Airborne Early Warning task returns to Culdrose

May 1989
New control tower opened

December 1995
FRADU Hawks arrive

July 1997
Basic helicopter pilot training moves to RAF Shawbury

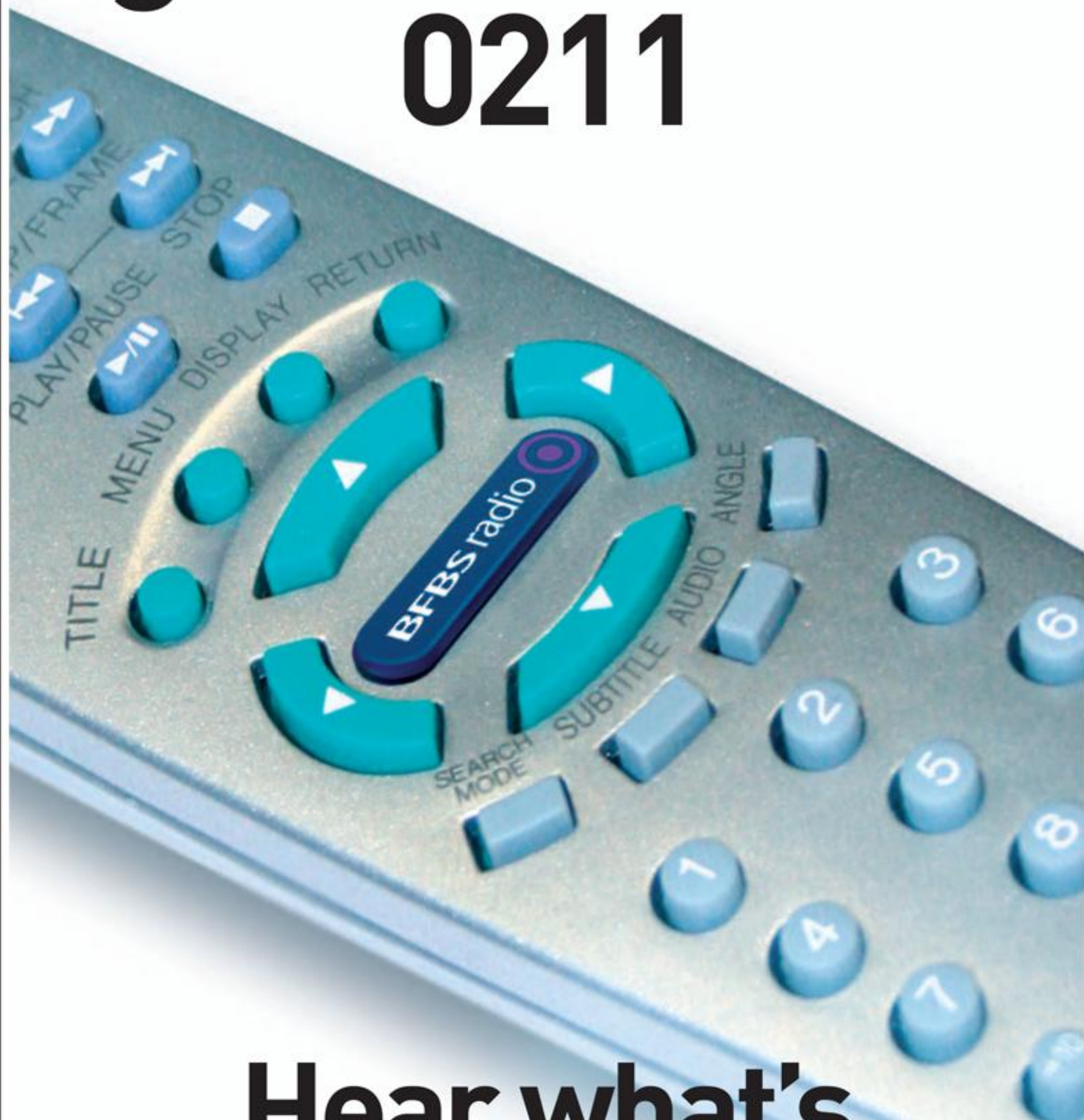
December 1998
Merlin helicopter arrives



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A hive of activity

AS BEFITS her ship's badge, HMS Manchester has enjoyed an industrious 2007 after re-joining the Fleet following a lengthy refit.

She spent most of 2006 out of action, receiving an overhaul courtesy of DML in Devonport.

The New Year opened with a bang. A week into 2007, the ship found herself back in Devonport for Operational Sea Training – the eight weeks of exercises which determine whether a ship is ready to deploy.

Having passed that challenge, the ship headed first for the North-West to catch up with affiliates in Manchester (although the destroyer herself was berthed in nearby Liverpool).

From there she continued northwards to take part in the Neptune Warrior war game run in Scottish waters.

Those exercises were barely over when the Busy Bee – so named for the insects buzzing around Manchester's badge – found herself across the North Sea for two weeks of 'war' with NATO's Exercise Noble Mariner (see pages 25-27).

As an air defence destroyer, Manchester was charged with protecting HMS Illustrious from attack from the skies, which meant constant alertness from her crew working in eight-hour watches.

Having successfully protected Lusty, the Busy Bee was called upon to safeguard assault ship HMS Albion, before turning her 4.5in gun at targets ashore.

As Noble Mariner reached its climax, Manchester found

herself with a new – and atypical – mission: race close inshore and deploy 25 Royal Marines from 40 Commando in inflatable boats.

Once safely landed, the Royals directed the shots of Manchester's 4.5in with pinpoint accuracy thanks to the Bowman communications system installed.

That was pretty much the last act of Manchester's Noble Mariner.

The Mancunians celebrated the exercise's end in true RN fashion: horse racing on the flight deck (in fancy dress) which, aside from being a hoot, raised more than £700 for the ship's welfare fund.

Given the size and importance of the city in Britain's history, Manchester is only the third ship to bear the name of the industrial metropolis.

Manchester No.1 was a hired vessel used as a stores ship at the tail-end of the Napoleonic wars.

More than a century passed before the name was resurrected in the form of the Town-class light cruiser.

Her career was chiefly divided between the Arctic and Mediterranean theatres, serving in the disastrous Norwegian campaign and convoys to Russia, at the clash with the Italian Fleet at Spartivento and on the runs to Malta.

And it was on the most famous convoy to Malta, Pedestal, in August 1942 that she was torpedoed by fast Italian boats. With Manchester listing heavily and ammunition running low, her captain controversially decided to scuttle the ship; he was subsequently court-martialled and dismissed from the Service, but his actions saved the lives of three

quarters of his crew.

No such clouds hang over the present Manchester, the first of the final Batch 3, or 'stretched', Type 42 destroyers.

She will celebrate her 25th birthday shortly before Christmas.

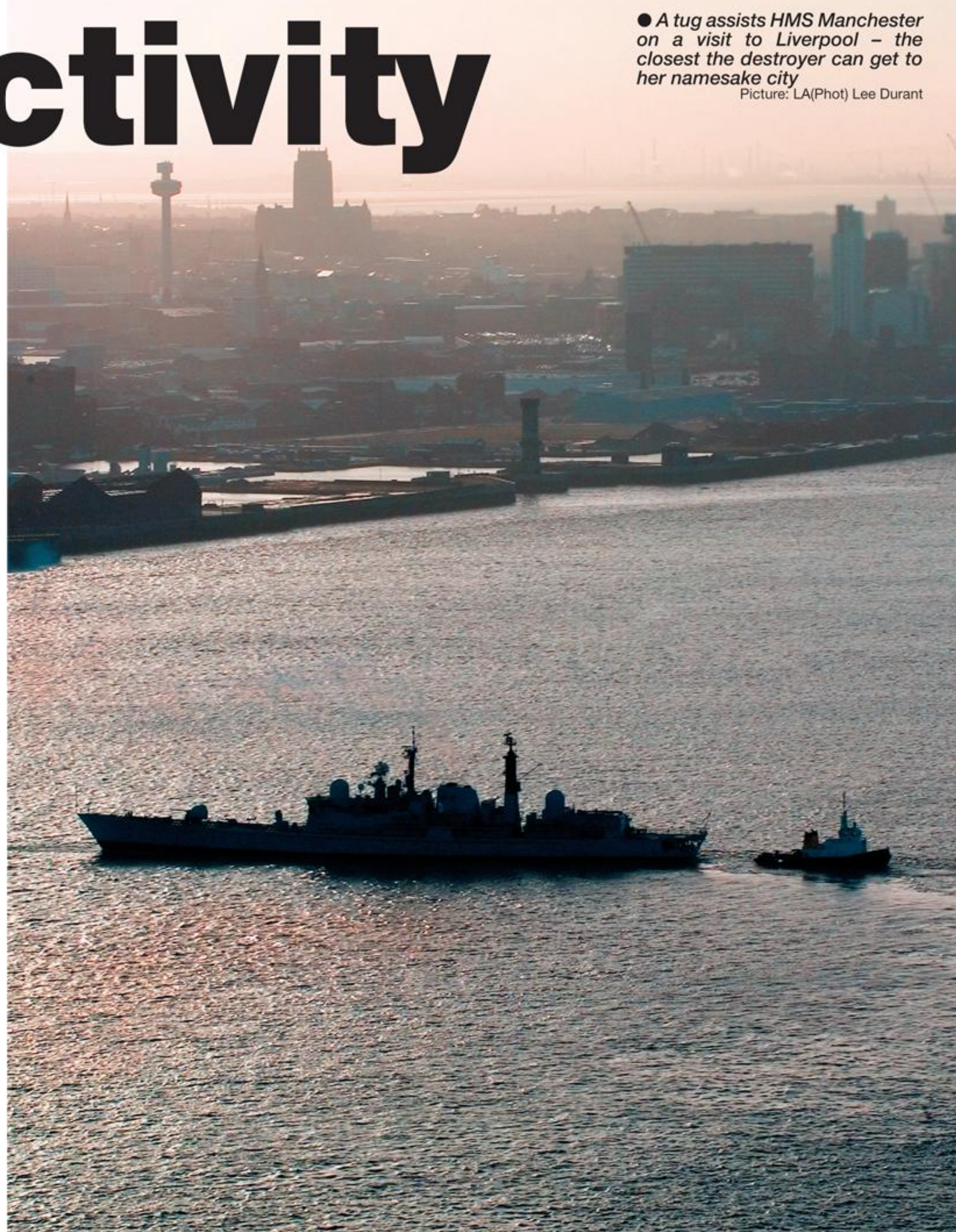


Norway.....1940
Spartivento.....1940
Malta Convoys.....1941-42
Arctic.....1942
Kuwait.....1991

Battle honours

Class: Type 42 destroyer, Batch 3
Pennant Number: D95
Motto: Sapere aude, dare to be wise
Builder: Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness
Launched: November 24 1980
Commissioned: December 16 1982
Length: 462ft
Beam: 49ft
Draft: 21ft
Top speed: in excess of 30 knots
Range: 4,000 nautical miles at 18 knots
Displacement: 4,566 tons
Complement: 24 officers, 212 ratings, 4 civilians
Engines: 2 x Rolls-Royce Olympus gas turbines; 2 x Rolls-Royce Tyne gas turbines
Weapons systems: 1 x Vickers 4.5in gun, 2 x 20mm, 2 x Phalanx automated machine guns, 2 x Mk44 Miniguns
Helicopter: 1 x Lynx Mk 3 or Mk 8 of 202 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron

Facts and figures



● A tug assists HMS Manchester on a visit to Liverpool – the closest the destroyer can get to her namesake city
Picture: LA(Phot) Lee Durant



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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY NO.39

Gunner Israel Harding VC

FOR a supposed era of *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Victoriana*, the latter years of the 19th Century were rather peppered with colonial wars.

And almost all of those conflicts centred on the so-called "dark continent" of Africa. The Empire became embroiled in particularly bitter (and infamous) wars in the Sudan and Zululand.

And when revolution swept through Egypt in the summer of 1882, the British Government sent in the Fleet to restore order, fearing the coup led by Egyptian Army officer Colonel Ahmed Orabi – or Orabi Pasha – would lead to his seizure of the Suez Canal and that he would simply cancel his country's huge debts.

At the head of the force dispatched was the flagship HMS Alexandra, flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, the most potent and fastest battleship afloat at her commissioning five years before.

And among her 674 crew was one Gunner Israel Harding, at 48 in the twilight of his naval career.

Harding – "a fine, jovial-looking seaman", according to *The Strand* magazine – had already proven his bravery a dozen years before in South America when he had put out a fire in a munitions factory, a deed for which he earned the Brazilian Medal and a testimonial letter from the country's regent.

On July 11 1882, Harding and his shipmates found themselves off Alexandria waiting for an ultimatum to be met or expire.

Orabi Pasha had been given until 5am to disarm his guns or face the consequences.

He chose to face the consequences. Two hours later the guns of the fleet barked and a steel hail began to fall on the forts of Alexandria.

This was not, however, a one-sided affair. The forts fought back, poorly at first, but as the summer morning progressed, their fire became increasingly accurate.

Alexandra was struck more than 60 times by Egyptian shell. One landed in the sheep pen, killing all the animals.

Others penetrated the hull and others still wreaked havoc between decks. And one 10in projectile smashed through the ship's side, rebounded off an engine room hatch and trickled along the deck – just a few feet from the ladder down to magazine.

Sailors were perturbed. "A shell, a shell!" they cried. Israel Harding kept his head. "I

just picked up that shell and flung it into a tub full of water," he almost nonchalantly recounted to a journalist.

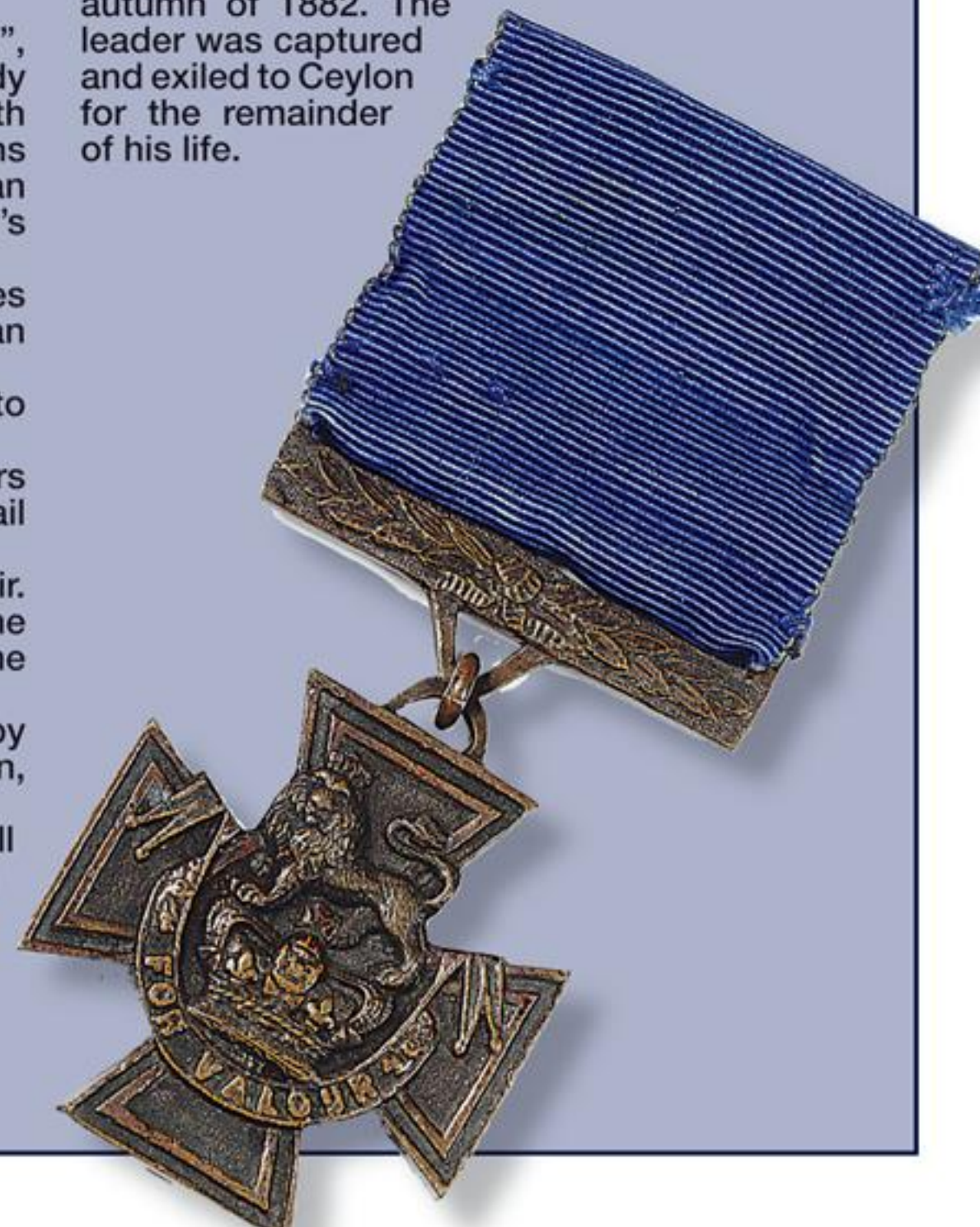
"It was heavy, hot and grimy. It is dreadful to think what would have happened had the shell exploded."

Thanks to Harding's selfless actions, it did not. He was recommended – and received – the VC, and was promoted to chief gunner, a rank he held for three years until his retirement...

... A retirement he enjoyed in Portsmouth until 1914 when war engulfed Europe. Now aged 80, Harding volunteered to go to sea once more, and served with minesweepers until a run in with a mine broke his leg and finally ended his naval days.

He died in May 1917 aged 83 while visiting his daughter in Sussex and was buried in Portsmouth's Highland Road Cemetery.

As for Orabi Pasha, his uprising was quashed by the British in the autumn of 1882. The leader was captured and exiled to Ceylon for the remainder of his life.





● An impressive view of the nation's flagship, HMS Ark Royal, arriving in Greenwich for 25th anniversary commemorations of victory in the Falklands

Picture: PO(Phot) Mark Hipkin, DPR(N) Whitehall

Their finest hour

TWENTY-FIVE years after the Senior Service's finest post-war hour, today's sailors, marines and airmen have extended hands across the generations to honour their forebears who liberated the Falklands.

Commemorations marking the sacrifices of 1982 reached their climax last month with heartfelt ceremonies in every corner of the British Isles as well as the sweeping, bleak bays of the South Atlantic islands.

In London the most visible symbol of the senior service was the Navy's flagship **HMS Ark Royal**, which berthed at Greenwich on June 13 and stayed for nearly a week to support the events.

The carrier hosted thousands of guests on pre-arranged visits, including schoolchildren and local community groups.

Nearly 8,000 miles away in the Falklands, **HMS Edinburgh**, currently on Atlantic Patrol Task (South) held a service on the spot where **HMS Coventry** was sunk in May 1982, 10 miles north of Pebble Island.

The Church Officer read the names of the 19 people, including a laundryman, who went down with **HMS Coventry** and remain with the ship, which is now an official war grave.

On the day of the national commemoration on 17 June, **HMS Edinburgh** was in San Carlos Water and fired her guns to signal the beginning of the two-minute silence for the service of remembrance.

HMS Edinburgh is currently taking part in a Sea Swap trial with **HMS Exeter** – the ships have swapped crews, so that **HMS Edinburgh** can continue her work in the South Atlantic with **Exeter's** crew, and **Edinburgh's** crew can be tasked around the UK.

HMS Exeter has been one of the busiest ships during Falklands 25. Early in May, she took a party of nine **HMS Exeter** veterans up the Thames on her

passage to London, where she subsequently invited on board members of the public, hosting more than 500 visitors on tours of the ship.

Later that month she visited Cornwall to take part in the commemorations in Newquay, where the Royal Marine Band from **HMS Raleigh** played for half an hour before a dramatic flotilla of Cornish fishing boats, sailing boats, gigs, coastguard vessels, lifeboats, tugs and yachts sailed past the ship, giving her a salute with flares and water cannon.

In June she visited the city of Edinburgh, home of her Sea Swap sister, on an affiliation visit, and stayed for five days, during which she welcomed aboard Falklands veterans, civic dignitaries and schoolchildren. She also took part in a Royal British Legion march and a service of remembrance at St Giles' Cathedral.

In Cardiff, **HMS York** welcomed Falklands veterans on board and was open to members of the public over the weekend. The ship supported the city's commemoration events with a 21-gun salute and a 24-man guard for the Commemorative Veterans' Parade.

HMS Bulwark berthed in Sunderland and provided a colour party and two platoons of sailors and marines for the Falklands parade in Newcastle, where thousands of people thronged the city centre for one of the largest Falklands 25 events outside London.

Detachments from **HMS Calliope** and **RMR Tyne** and the **Band of the Royal Marines Scotland** joined the sailors from **Bulwark**.

Earlier in June **Bulwark** visited the west coast of Scotland, where she conducted a memorial service for **Foxtrot 4**, the landing craft from 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines, which was attacked by enemy aircraft two weeks after taking survivors off **HMS Antelope**, with the loss of C/Sgt Brian Johnston and five of his sailors and Marines.

The minehunter **HMS Quorn** visited Bristol for a long weekend which culminated in a service in Bristol

Cathedral on 20 May, attended by 700 personnel from all three services, and the **Band of the Royal Marines Plymouth**.

Seven Royal Marines and one RN sailor based in Poole were killed during the 1982 campaign, and servicemen and women from **Royal Marines Poole** marched through the town to remember their colleagues and exercise their Freedom of the Borough.

A Viking amphibious vehicle followed the parade, which was led by the **Band of HM Royal Marines** and a **Guard of Honour**.

RN establishments held their own special events. Sailors from **HMS Collingwood** remembered the Falklands as they celebrated their Freedom of Fareham with a march through the town followed by an inspection by Lady Thatcher.

Earlier that day the former Prime Minister had visited Portsmouth Naval Base to view the special display Task Force South – The Royal Navy and the Falklands War – at the Royal Naval Museum.

In **HMS Raleigh**, some of the Navy's newest recruits joined Falklands' veterans for the establishment's passing-out parade, which included a Falklands platoon.

The Inspecting Officer was Commodore Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England, who served in **HMS Coventry** during the campaign and survived the sinking of both the ship and his life-raft.

A joint team of Clearance Divers and Royal Engineer Divers from the **Defence Diving School** and **Fleet Diving Squadron** flew to the Falkland Islands to pay their respects to the lost ship's company of **HMS Ardent**.

The five-man team, led by Lt 'Soapy' Watson, dived on the wreck, where LS(D) John O'Brien laid a plaque and Lt Watson raised the Ensign. Cdr Ken Enticknap, who was a chief stoker fighting fires on the **Ardent**, was also in the boat during the dive and was

able to pay his respects to his lost shipmates.

The Earl of Wessex and the Minister for the Armed Forces, Adam Ingram, laid wreaths during a memorial service for the **Royal Fleet Auxiliary** at Port Fitzroy on 13 June.

On Friday June 15 Prince Michael of Kent paid tribute to the Merchant Navy and RFA at a sunset wreath-laying ceremony at the Merchant Navy Falklands War Memorial in Trinity Square, London.

The event also marked the vital contribution of the many civilians who helped to put the Task Force together, and those civilian crew members who volunteered to stay at their posts and travelled south.

The memorial was unveiled in 2005 to commemorate the Merchant Navy and RFA sailors who lost their lives when the **Atlantic Conveyor** and **RFA Sir Galahad** went down.

The RFA has its own Falklands Memorial at Marchwood, near Southampton.

Members of the RFA, **RFA Association**, **Sir Galahad** and **Sir Tristram** Association and families gathered for a memorial service on 8 June, the day in 1982 on which **Sir Galahad** was lost and **Sir Tristram** was bombed.

Every year a service is held at the site of the memorial, at St John the Apostle Church in Marchwood, where a wall carries the names of all the RFA who lost their lives, and the crests of the ships on which they had served and sailed from Marchwood.

Dinners and private reunions were held all over the UK. Lady Thatcher was a guest at a dinner hosted by the Lord Mayor of London based on the 'Campaign Victory Dinner' which she held in October 1982.

The Princess Royal was the guest of honour at the 'Heroes Dinner' at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich; and Lady Fieldhouse was guest of honour at the Battle of the Falklands Anniversary dinner held in HMS Nelson.

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● The strikingly simple memorial to Atlantic Conveyor, unveiled in the Falklands Islands by the Earl of Wessex, and (above) a personal tribute to CPO Allan McAulay, killed in HMS Ardent. His widow Barbara and children Tara and Justin laid a wreath on the shore at San Carlos



Separated,

AT THE heart of Falklands 25 commemorations were three ceremonies as varied in their scope and content as they were dispersed in location, but bound by a common thread.

They revolved around Pangbourne College, Horse Guards Parade and, of course, the islands which gave the war its name – and its reason.

Pangbourne in Berkshire hosted the first official event – and the sole one attended by the monarch – on Liberation Day, June 14.

The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prime Minister joined families, veterans and other guests, including Lady Thatcher, for a Service of Thanksgiving at the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, which was opened in 2000.

During the service a stone from the Falkland Islands – one of 255 brought back by HMS Chatham – was blessed.

Afterwards the Queen placed it on the memorial cairn, where each stone represents the life of a Serviceman who died in the campaign, following the Scottish tradition of remembering those who never came home from battle.

Chatham brought the rocks back last year, having chosen them from symbolic sites across the islands, such as San Carlos, Mount London, Goose Green, Mount Harriet and Mount Tumbledown.

Before the Pangbourne service

four Joint Force Harriers from RAF Cottesmore staged a flypast, representing the 1982 Harrier Squadrons; this was their key opportunity to pay homage to their predecessors as flying regulations would not allow Harriers to join the fly-past over London the following Sunday.

During their briefing and rehearsal at RAF Cottesmore, the pilots were joined by colleagues from the 1982 campaign, including former RAF Sea Harrier pilot David Morgan, who flew more than 50 operational sorties and destroyed three Argentine aircraft.

They were able to compare Harriers past and present, as a carefully-preserved 1982 model was placed next to a present-day Harrier GR9.

The principal commemoration – televised nationwide by the BBC – was staged simultaneously in London and the Falklands on Sunday June 17, when 10,000 Falkland veterans (roughly one third of all those who took part in the 1982 campaign) and their families took part in a national service of remembrance and commemoration, attended by the Prince of Wales.

On Horse Guards Parade, the assembled audience were able to watch pre-recorded film and interviews on giant screens, telling the story of the Falklands campaign in words and music.



FALKLANDS 25

Via a live link with the Falkland Islands 8,000 miles away – and across five time zones – they

watched events in San Carlos Bay, where the Earl of Wessex was attending a remembrance

ceremony and laying a wreath in the military cemetery.

The prayers were led in San Carlos by the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable John Green.

Among the VIPS at the London end were the Duke of York, who marched with the Fleet Air Arm after the parade; Prime Minister; Tony Blair and his 1982 predecessor Lady Thatcher; Defence Secretary Des Browne and senior commanders in the campaign, including Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach – the man who told the politicians Britain could, and should, fight for the Falklands.

Lady Thatcher was the only VIP to receive a spontaneous round of applause as she climbed out of her official car and onto the podium.

The Naval contingent was the first to march on, and there was a rousing cheer as the Band of HM Royal Marines in their distinctive white helmets came through the Arch into Horse Guards Parade.

They were followed by the sailors serving and veterans, led by former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West, who in 1982 commanded the frigate HMS Ardent, lost in the battle of 'Bomb Alley' after a valiant flight.





● A VC10 accompanied by Naval and RAF Hawks flies over Buckingham Palace at the end of the parade and (left) the Prince of Wales takes the salute at the Victoria Monument



but as one

The Surface Fleet was represented by more than 1,100 men, including veterans from 44 of the ships and submarines which took part in the campaign.

The second Royal Marines Band led in nearly 300 green berets, headed by Major General Jim Dutton, who served in the Falklands as a Signals Officer with 40 Commando.

In the same contingent were women from Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service; the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and the Merchant Navy.

Once the Navy and Army were assembled the parade ground was so full that the Army had to do a rapid right-dress to make way for the Royal Air Force and their band.

Among the testimonies was a particularly moving account from Ken Enticnap, who at the time of the conflict was a marine engineer in HMS Ardent.

He vividly recounted being trapped when his ship was fatally hit in Falkland Sound on May 21 1982.

Overwhelmed by thick smoke, he thought he was going to die – until by some miracle a waft of fresh air from an opening revived him and he managed to fight his way out.

When he was waiting to be picked up by the helicopter, he saw his colleague lifted in a bear-hug by a winchman – who turned out to be Surg Cdr Rick Jolly.

“He appeared in front of me like the Angel Gabriel,” he recalled. Peter Babbington, who

commanded the leading company of 42 Commando RM on Mount Harriet, remembered how the Marines camped out in freezing conditions for 11 days before their surprise assault on the mountain where Argentinian soldiers held the upper ground.

“There was no shelter and with the wind chill factor temperatures fell as low as minus 30 degrees,” he recalled.

“But when we had to fight, we forgot the cold and fear.”

Kathryn Nutbeem, whose father, Maj Roger Nutbeem, died in the Falklands when she was five years old, sang *Somewhere Along The Road* in his memory.

Kathryn inherited her father's love of singing and trained at the Royal Academy of Music; she is now a professional actress and singer and performs on behalf of SSAFA and the Army Benevolent Fund.

At the end of the formal part of the ceremony, a group of young people from Peter Symonds College in the Falkland Islands thanked the veterans for their part in liberating their homeland.

“If it were not for you, we would not be here today,” they said.

After the ceremony in Horse Guards, the parade marched to the Queen Victoria monument outside Buckingham Palace.

Here the Prince of Wales took the salute and the veterans lined up outside the palace to watch a fly-past of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, ending in a splendid flourish with the RAF's Red Arrows.

RN, RM, RFA and maritime units which took part in the conflict and were represented at the Falklands 25 Parade in London included:

ROYAL NAVY

HMS Active; HMS Alacrity; HMS Ambuscade; HMS Andromeda; HMS Antelope; HMS Antrim; HMS Ardent; HMS Argonaut; HMS Arrow; HMS Avenger; HMS Brilliant; HMS Bristol; HMS Broadsword; HMS Cardiff; HMS Cordella; HMS Coventry; HMS Dumbarton Castle; HMS Endurance; HMS Exeter; HMS Farnella; HMS Fearless; HMS Glamorgan; HMS Glasgow; HMS Hecla; HMS Herald; HMS Hydra; HMS Hermes; HMS Intrepid; HMS Invincible; HMS Junella; HMS Leeds Castle; HMS Minerva; HMS Penelope; HMS Plymouth; HMS Pict; HMS Sheffield; HMS Yarmouth; HMS Conqueror; HMS Courageous; HMS Onyx; HMS Spartan; HMS Splendid; HMS Valiant

ROYAL MARINES

3 Commando Brigade; 40 Commando; 42 Commando; 45 Commando; Commando Logistic Regiment; 3 Commando Brigade Air NAS; Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre

FLEET AIR ARM

800 NAS, 801 NAS, 809 NAS, 899 NAS, 815 NAS, 845 NAS, 846 NAS, 847 NAS, 848 NAS (all RNAS Yeovilton); 824 NAS, 825 NAS, 820 NAS, 826 NAS (all RNAS Culdrose) 737 NAS, 829 NAS (RNAS Portland)

ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY

Stromness; Sir Percival; Sir Tristram; Fort Grange; Brambleleaf; Tidepool; Sir Lancelot; Plumleaf; Olmeda; Engadine; Sir Geraint; Olina; Sir Galahad; Bayleaf; Regent; Sir Bedivere; Appleleaf; Resource; Tidespring

MERCHANT NAVY

Atlantic Causeway; Atlantic Conveyor; British Tamar; MV Anco Charger; MV Alvega; MV British Esk; MV British Trent; MV Nordic Ferry; MV Norland; MV Saxonia; MV Scottish Eagle; MV Stena Seaspread; RFA Fort Grange; RFA Resource; RMS Queen Elizabeth II; SS Canberra; SS St Edmund; SS Uganda

● (Right) Prince Michael of Kent lays a wreath at the RFA and Merchant Navy memorial in London's Trinity Square and (below) the stirring sight of the Royal Marines Band marching in Horse Guards Parade during the national commemoration

● (Below left) The Queen places a stone on the cairn created from 255 rocks – symbolising the war's 255 British dead – at Pangbourne College in Berkshire





● Sgt Mark Hayes

Marathon Marine Mark

ROYAL Marine Sgt Mark Hayes survived the London marathon to raise £1,550 for charity WellChild. At the finish line he promised himself "Never again". Then one week later he signed his name up for the New York marathon...

Pledge your support to the green beret, who is running for the Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity, at www.justgiving.com/RoyalMarines or in one of the collection boxes in senior messes across the RN.

Beards out on Campbelltown

SAILORS from HMS Campbelltown raised more than £2,800 for various charities during their recent deployment.

The money was gathered through a number of activities, including the well-known horse – or in this case, camel – racing night and a beard-growing competition.

The money will be split with £500 going to charities in the Type 22's affiliated town in Scotland, £1,600 to the Children's Hospice South West, and £750 to Plymouth's Anchor Support Group that helps families with disabled children.

Commanding Officer Capt Rupert Wallace said: "We are delighted to support Anchor Group. It is reassuring to know that Service families with disabled children are offered this kind of help, particularly if one of the parents is away."

Up in the air at Culdrose

THE 'helping hands' of RNAS Culdrose have been reaching out over Cornwall in recent weeks.

Eleven trainees from 824 NAS – the Merlin training squadron – took on a Ground Force mission at Mullion Primary School where they set to work with a will on the school's playing field, building fences, making paths and setting up a basketball net.

More from the Merlin squadron headed off to help renovate a local gym in just two days. The Swallows gym in Helston trains young gymnasts, but the premises were becoming distinctly run down.

The staff of the local gym club put out a plea – and 824 stepped forward to help, painting walls and laying a patio.

CO Cdr 'Tricky' Dane said: "Our team acted almost like the BBC's Changing Rooms team and managed to bring new life to these sites in a matter of days."

"We are very pleased to be able to help, and I am sure that our trainees will get a lot from this exercise too."

It's not just 824 NAS who've been helping out at Culdrose – 25 people took part in a swimathon to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care and raised the impressive total of £4,500 for the cancer charity.

And Shelterbox remains close to Culdrose with families and individuals enjoying the benefits of the night in a Shelterbox tent and raising £600.



● Chiefs and WOs from HMS Cornwall don green T-shirts for the Mount Everest Press-up Charity Challenge

Cornwall goes green

THE MOUNT Everest Press-up Charity Challenge saw 24 CPOs and WOs from HMS Cornwall flex their muscles some 29,030 times, equivalent to the 29,030-foot height of HMS Everest.

The strained arm muscles on board the frigate on patrol in the Northern Arabian Gulf added up to £1,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support in Cornwall.

Fishing for cash

HOSPICE Rachel House in Fife, part of the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS), has benefited from the angling talents of the Royal Navy.

HMS Caledonia's PO Warren Malcolm came up with the idea and tempted more than a dozen anglers to fish for glory on the banks of Loch Fitty – despite a grim day of weather.

Warren said: "CHAS is a great charity, which does amazing work at Rachel House for terminally-ill children."

"I just thought it would be fantastic to be raise some money for them. And, of course, fishing is a bit of a passion of mine, so it seemed like a fun way of doing it."

Although the first catches of the day went to novice fishermen Lt Mark Ruston and Sgt Tam McAuley, it was organiser Warren himself who netted the heaviest bag of the day with four fish weighing over 10lb.

The prize for biggest single catch went to PO Russell Kerwin for his 4lb 8oz fish.

The day raised some £670 for the Fife-based hospice.

Warren said: "I am really delighted with the amount of money we raised, but I'm hoping to organise a bigger and better gala-style day at Loch Fitty in September."

"We organised this one in about a month, so I reckon that we can get even more people with more notice."

"And more people means more funds for CHAS."

Warren specifically thanked Richard and Helen Philp who run the loch for all their help in setting up the event.

Welsh dragons abroad

THREE men from the Wales University Royal Naval Unit are packing their bags and heading out to the loftier peaks of the Alps for a charity challenge.

Matt Williams, Matt Wilson and John Little, all students at Cardiff University, are taking on one of the hardest foot races in Europe, the Ultra Trail around Mont Blanc, covering 86km, climbing more than 5,000m in less than 24 hours.

All money raised will go to Ty Hafan, the Children's Hospice in Wales.

If you would like to support them, visit www.justgiving.com/walesurnucharity, or telephone 07813 855437.

Rainbow at Fareham

SAILORS from HMS Collingwood have been back to the Rainbow Centre in Fareham clearing up the centre's assault course.

Officers from the System Engineering and Management Training centre visited the unit that cares for children with cerebral palsy as part of a long-standing relationship between Collingwood and the Rainbow centre.

Drake deeps are all Heart

FIVE instructors from HMS Drake are in training to run 368 kilometres (228 miles) from Plymouth to London later this year.

The five, part of a satellite unit of Raleigh's Royal Navy Submarine School, will run the distance in a 12km per person per day relay over five days in aid of the South West Children's Heart Circle.

Organiser WO Dermot 'Robbie' Roberts said: "Having recently suffered a heart attack myself, I thought it would be fitting to support a 'heart' based charity as a way of saying thank you and showing other people that you can recover and lead a normal life."

"Based at Bristol Children's Hospital, the charity carries out wonderful work with children with cardiac problems."

The team can be sponsored online at www.justgiving.com/submarinerslondonrun.

Shameless Nicklas

IN a self-confessed 'blunderbuss' approach for support, Lt Cdr Colin Nicklas – who has previously appeared on these pages after running the Snowdonia marathon – is calling on everyone out there to take a look at his website www.madcharitychallenge.com.

This year the officer has teamed up with Lt 'AJ' Snell to take on a series of gruelling endurance challenges, mainly involving running, rowing and riding.

All this work is in aid of Children's Hospice South West – and the two are eyeing up the charity's annual Bus Pull on Plymouth Hoe this July, although they do concede it might perhaps be a little tough for just the two of them...

Performing at their peak

TWELVE people from Abbey Wood will be looking peaky in early July when sailors and civil servants from the Marine Power and Propulsion IPT will be climbing 24 peaks of the Lake District in just 24 hours...

The group, split into two teams of six, will split the 24 hours over two days, and are raising money for Seafarers UK.

If you want to support the teams, please visit the website www.justgiving.com/mppspt.



● The Rev Nev Kelly, flanked by POPT Jason Wallace, Capt Tim Lowe and Leading Chef 'Elly' Ellison and Surg Lt Cdr Andy Cormack begin the HMS Albion commemorative charity rowathon

They do row, don't they?

SAILORS from assault ship HMS Albion are rowing from Plymouth to the Falkland Islands, while their ship works her way around the Baltic as part of the NATO Response Force.

The men and women of the Plymouth-based warship, as well as commemorating the events of

25 years before, are raising money for the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust in Ivybridge.

The ship's chaplain, The Rev Nev Kelly, has helped maintain the strong links between the ship and the centre, that supports young people with complex physical disabilities.

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Bulwark brings Disney to Durham

SAILORS from assault ship HMS Bulwark arrived bedecked with paint pots and brushes at a children's ward at Bishop Auckland Hospital in County Durham.

WO Andy Lane and his team of five decorated the children's outpatients ward with a Disney theme.

The amphibious ship has had a long-standing relationship with the hospital since build.

WO Lane said: "The ship has an extremely close relationship with the children's ward and we are always delighted to be able to support them in any way we can."

"We are always made to feel very welcome by staff, children and patients. It is especially rewarding to be able to make a difference, however small, in the lives of children."

Not so blue for dark blue

A RECENT report *Supporting seafarers and their families: challenges for the future*, produced by the Maritime Charities Funding Group, has concluded that poverty in seafaring communities is set to grow despite a drop in the number of people working at sea.

The report looked into the needs of serving and retired seafarers and their families from the Royal Navy, the Merchant Navy, and the fishing fleets of the UK.

There are some 100 charities spending around £125 million each year supporting more than 50,000 people who are current or former seafarers or their families – but the seafaring community extends to almost 1.5 million people.

While the Royal Navy makes up almost half of the working seafarers in the UK, Service personnel are in a much stronger position than their civilian counterparts.

At least 35 per cent of fishermen and 12 per cent of merchant ratings suffer serious debt.

And at least half of all seafarers – 85 per cent in the case of fishermen – have no pension to look forward to other than the state pension.

The report was launched at a national conference of 100 maritime charities that are coming together to ensure that available resources are allocated to the greatest needs.

Lourdes' prayer

THE PILGRIMAGE centre of Lourdes has drawn two Service groups to its heart in recent months.

The longest-running of the groups is the HCPT(RN) – The Pilgrimage Trust, which has had a formal Royal Navy group since 1982.

This year the RN group took 26 children (20 of whom were from Service families) with a range of conditions from autism to cerebral palsy.

The adult helpers principally had a Royal Navy connection, either family, retired or still serving, from units as diverse as HMS Illustrious, HMNB Clyde, diving units and Gibraltar.

During the week the helpers stay with the children night and day, bringing the Naval team spirit to bear whether on religious activities or secular pursuits.

Lt Cdr Phil Sparke said: "All this served to get the children into a team from very early on, and it was particularly moving to see them gain consciousness of what they could do rather than focussing on their limitations."

"It was truly impressive to see a 13-year-old boy with quadriplegia and cerebral palsy offer to carry a helper's bag from his wheelchair. And a 17-year-old girl with cerebral palsy being helped with the actions to a song by an eight-year-old boy with dyspraxia."

"Sights such as these remain forever, and never fail to bring a tear or two to the eye of even the toughest of helpers."

The Joint Services Hosanna House Group (JSHHG) is the only adult joint Service group and relies on the good work of volunteers from all three Services.

This group supports adults with disabilities, whether former Service personnel or from Service families, who also enjoy a week of sightseeing and reflection around the religious centre in France.

The JSHHG coincides its visit with the International Military Pilgrimage, taking part in the parade and the celebrations.

CMEM Ian Atkinson, who has been for seven years, said: "I've never been in one place with so many people being so friendly to each other. Language is not a



● PO(MedTech) Lisa Banks runs water on to the hands of James Renshaw, one of the adult guests on the Joint Services Hosanna House Group pilgrimage to Lourdes within the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

barrier. It's a fantastic place."

Both these pilgrimages require people from the Navy to support their efforts and to keep the Service spirit alive – if you would be interested in helping, or if

someone you know might benefit from these pilgrimage groups, please contact the HCPT(RN) at hcpt-186.admin@ntlworld.com or JSHHG through www.jshhg.co.uk or tel 07790 902047.



● The BRNC Field Gun team at work at Dartmouth Pre-School

Gunning for the charity prize

NOW we all know that the Field Gun Run is hard work and requires a tough training programme to keep the teams fit and ready... but two teams decided that they could turn their hard work to good use at local schools.

The team from Britannia Royal Naval College headed out to Dartmouth Pre-School to carry out a *Changing-Rooms* mission, turning a derelict classroom into a thing of beauty.

POPT Paul 'Shiner' Wright said: "It's been a really worthwhile evolution. The kids will love it, the parents will love it and the teachers will love it."

"Three hours of our time saves months of voluntary hard work from the staff."

Field Gun Officer Lt Guy Wadge added: "It's been really good to get the team working together for such a good cause. We start formal training with the gun next week and it's fantastic to get the team bonding in advance."

Over in Plymouth the Devonport Field Gun Crew took up their spades to dig a new pond for St Joseph's Primary School in the city.

The school has spent the last 14 months transforming old waste ground into a thriving allotment, growing fruit and vegetables.

The pond will attract wildlife and help the children in their school activities.

The Devonport crew are also raising money for other charities.

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MENU

LIGHTLY-SMOKED MAPLE-GLAZED SALMON, CREAMED AVOCADO, HOT POTTED CRAYFISH, SAFFRON SCALLOP, APPLE SALSA

LAMB VARIATIONS – GARLIC-INFUSED CANNON, BREAST WITH BLACK PUDDING AND ARTICHOKE, CRUMBED SWEETBREAD, DAUPHINOISE POTATO, GIROLLES WITH BROAD BEANS, CARROT PURÉE, LAMB JUS

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, SHORTBREAD WITH RASPBERRIES, PISTACHIO AND PLUM CAKE, VANILLA ICE CREAM, RASPBERRY ESPUMA

Silver service from RN chefs

AN RN-led culinary team returned from the US with four silver medals after competing with the world's top chefs.

The Combined Services Culinary Arts Team represented Great Britain at the National Restaurant Association's Culinary Classic in Chicago – billed as the top contest for chefs in the USA.

The British squad had minimal practice – two week-long training sessions together as a team – before heading for the Windy City to compete against 11 other national sides.

Royal Marine WO1 'Monty' Montgomery managed the team, whose 12 chefs included PO John Potts and C/Sgt Si Atkinson.

They were required to produce a complex cold buffet and an imaginative three-course meal for 80 diners.

The last time the Combined Services appeared in Chicago four years ago they did well, but not as well as in 2007 – a success which comes on the back of the team's second place in the military strand of the Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg in November.

Convention chairman William Anton said judges had been dazzled by the contestants' innovation, presentation and, not least, culinary prowess.

In the footsteps of heroes

A COMBINED Royal Naval Reserve team spent three days marching through Flanders in the footsteps of the fallen.

Sailors from HMS Calliope (Gateshead), Wildfire (Northwood) and President (London) joined teams from the TA, Deutsches Heer and Belgian Army, plus civilian walking clubs on the Ypres 100km march.

The three-day walk/march takes participants around the historic cloth town and the Flanders terrain which British, Belgian and German troops fought over desperately in the Great War.

As well as marching around Flanders, the RNR team laid a wreath at the Belgian War Memorial and took part in the daily sunset ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, where more than 50,000 Commonwealth soldiers are commemorated.

Carmen karma

THE efforts of PO Peter Whittaker aboard the Black Duke earned him the Carmen's RN Award for his skill as a logistician.

The award was founded last year by the Worshipful Company of Carmen to recognise the most outstanding non-commissioned logistics specialist across the RN, RM and RFA.

Peter, who's now serving at Devonport, earned the rare distinction of a 'very good' assessment from FOST staff as HMS Monmouth went through operational seal training.



● And another thing, young man... Henry Allingham shares his secret of longevity with Royal Marines Drum Major James Whitham in Victory Arena during 111th-birthday celebrations.

As is worthy of his status as (deep breath), Britain's oldest sailor, Britain's oldest naval aviator, Britain's oldest man, Europe's oldest man and the oldest living survivor of the Great War, Mr Allingham was treated to an unforgettable party in Portsmouth.

Henry, who lives in a St Dunstan's home for blind ex-Servicemen near Brighton, is celebrated by the Fleet Air Arm and RAF; he is the last reminder of the FAA's precursor, the Royal Naval Air Service, and a founder member of the Royal Air Force.

And so it was that the RN Historic Flight and present-day RAF jets flew over HMS Victory, watched by Mr Allingham, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns and Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg, who joined the centenarian for dinner in the Great Cabin.

Ten of Henry's relatives, including eight grandchildren and great-grandchildren from the USA, were also on hand to help the 111-year-old celebrate, as were scores of Portsmouth schoolchildren.

As for being 111, with typical humour, Henry says: "It's just the same as it was at any age – I'm pleased to be seeing another tomorrow. I'm happy to be alive."

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave

Land of soap and glory

Honours for Vince and Ian

THE words 'submariner' and 'luxury living' do not ordinarily sit side-by-side.

But deep Lt Cdr Andy Mills is hoping to clean up (*Groan – Ed*) at the top end of the market with a bar of soap.

Not any old bar of soap, mind you, but one made from jade (the mineral, not the disgraced reality TV star).

Actually, it's not even soap. It's a 'beauty bar'. And it will cost you the princely sum of £17.99 (compared with, say, 50p for a bar of Imperial Leather...).

But the Northerner (*pictured, right, holding the jade bar*) is convinced that where there's brass there's muck, and is leaving the RN to sell the bar full-time with his fiancée Charlotte Newbert.

Andy has appeared in these pages on a few occasions, normally connected with his work at the SETT in Gosport, or in the sports section for his prowess at tennis and the Cresta Run.

But the submarine weapons engineer officer concedes that after 26 years in the Senior Service, leaving the Royal Navy to sell posh soap, sorry beauty bar, is a bit of a challenge.

"Until recently I was training submariners in escape procedures and now I spend my day generating marketing and advertising plans, preparing for beauty trade fairs and planning TV and radio campaigns," he adds.

But who will pay £17.99 for a bar of soap? Quite a lot of people, it seems; the couple

are shifting upwards of 500 bars of the jade soap, Nephria, every month (that's around £9,000 turnover).

So what is the secret of eternal youth?

Well, apparently, it's all down to a bloke from Korea and his market stall.

The couple were holidaying in the Far East last summer when they stumbled across a market in the South Korean capital Seoul.

Charlotte spied a trader selling beauty bars, got chatting and hey presto, a few months later she'd quit her job in insurance to sell the jade bars to an international market, persuading Andy to give up his life in the RN to run the distribution company.

Which isn't necessarily a bad thing as the officer has spent much of the past year travelling, trying to persuade the world to buy the upmarket soap and squeezing the product into national newspapers and magazines such as lads' gadget mag *Stuff*.

And we've managed to get through the entire story without calling Andy a soapstar...



D-Day legend relives fateful days

SIXTY-THREE years to the day after he dropped troops into Normandy, American former pilot Col Lloyd Neblett returned to his old airfield as a guest of honour.

Back in 1944, Col Neblett (*pictured right by LA(Phot) Billy Bunting*) was a pilot of a DC Dakota, flying two missions over Normandy on D-Day from his base at Merryfield – satellite airfield of RNAS Yeovilton, and still used today by the Fleet Air Arm.

And as he carried men of America's 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment into battle that fateful day, a bundle of kit dropped from another Dakota above his aircraft landed on his wing.

The then Capt Neblett struggled to keep his Dakota from stalling as the paratroopers jumped, before he lost the battle and the aircraft dropped to just 600ft, whereupon it was raked with flak.

The German guns blasted eight feet off his right wing and shot away three feet of his aileron, but somehow the airman managed to regain control of the aircraft – the

aptly-named Round Trip – and get it back to Merryfield. His efforts on June 6 1944 earned him the DFC.

Six decades later, the retired US Air Force officer was presented with photographs of Merryfield as it is now, while the RAF staged a flypast with a C17 transport aircraft.



PILOT Lt Ian Brannighan and observer Lt Vince Owen begin their respective front-line careers with the Fleet Air Arm with trophies to their names.

The two 815 NAS officers were named winners of the Admiral Sir Dudley Pound Prize as best students on their respective courses.

Lt Brannighan was a keen sportsman at university, captaining Newcastle University's ice hockey team at the British University Championships.

In his relatively short time in the RN he has spent six months in New Zealand as operations officer of the RNZN Support Flight (based near Auckland), and managed to find time to learn to drive the two-man bobsleigh.

Lt Owen joined the general service back in 2000 and served as navigator of HMS Inverness and Leeds Castle before switching to the FAA as an observer, initially with 702 NAS and now with 815.

The officers earned their wings in December. Lt Brannighan now serves with 815's Operational Readiness Unit; his colleague has joined HMS Manchester's Flight.

... and for Simon

WORK by day and night by PO(C) Simon Hall earned him a 'citizen of honour' title at Fareham's mayor-making ceremony.

The Collingwood-based senior rating provides key communications and information systems instruction to rookie sailors fresh out of basic training at HMS Raleigh – a job which requires more than mere teaching, but nurturing their talent and helping trainees in their burgeoning Royal Navy careers.

Outside work, Simon can be found regularly volunteering his services (and those of many of his shipmates) helping out at Porchester Community Centre and St Vincent's College nursery school in Gosport.

Not content with that, he organises visits by trainees to pre-schools for Service personnel families in the Portsmouth area.



Rs end for reservists

THE distinctive 'R' which characterises the uniforms of officers of the Royal Naval Reserve is no more as of the first of this month.

The Queen has agreed to the removal of the letter from the 'curl' of an officer's rank insignia – and all other marks on uniforms which distinguish men and women of the RNR from their General Service counterparts on operations.

With the RNR being called upon increasingly to support front-line operations, either here in the UK or deployed in the field, many reservists felt it was time to remove any insignia which distinguished their contribution from their full-time oppos.

The decision will mean an increased demand for insignia from RN stores in coming weeks, so reservists will be given until November 1 to replace their Rs. The replacements will be provided free of charge.

"This is a significant step towards reserves' integration and a sure indication of the recognition of the hugely-important contribution being made by the Royal Naval Reserve to current operations," said Cdre Stephen Thorne, Commander Maritime Reserves.

Further information on RN insignia will be published in an impending DIN.

Getting to know you...

AFTER the heat of the Gulf, the crew of mine countermeasures vessel HMS Ramsey are re-acquainting themselves with Scottish weather in their sister ship.

The sailors have taken over HMS Pembroke (while Pembroke's ship's company has taken over HMS Ramsey, still in the Gulf on the three-year Aintree deployment) at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Once they got used to guard rails in different positions (and other idiosyncrasies), the new Pembroke crew were given a thorough testing by the staff of the Flag Officer Sea Training's mine warfare experts.

Barely three weeks after setting foot in Pembroke for the first time, the Ramsey sailors deployed in for 21 days of detailed survey work in the Inner Hebrides.

That survey work has been interspersed with visits to Campbeltown and Tobermory.

Pembroke is now back in Faslane while her sailors conducted practical mine warfare training for sailors returning from various courses under the tutelage of the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

Milestone for HMS Wildfire

NORTHWOOD'S Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Wildfire was celebrating its Golden Jubilee as *Navy News* went to press with Admiral's Divisions.

Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt – Flag Officer Reserves – was due to be guest of honour at the ceremony on June 23 (strictly speaking Wildfire's birthday is May 6).

The admiral was to take the salute from the present HMS Wildfire ship's company, watched by former Wildfire and HMS Northwood sailors, and serving personnel from NATO headquarters, soldiers and airmen stationed at Northwood, plus families.

D-Day for Daring

THE world's most advanced warship will put to sea for the first time on July 18, four years after she was laid down.

Shipwrights, engineers and electricians are adding the finishing touches to HMS Daring – the first of Britain's next-generation air defence destroyers – ready for the most important test yet in her brief life.

The Type 45 warship is currently sitting in dry dock at BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard on the Clyde (where the majority of her was built and fitted out; her mast and bow were produced by the VT Group in Portsmouth).

Engineers from BAE plus Daring's ship's company will take the destroyer to sea for initial sea trials off the Scottish west coast before bringing her back up the Clyde for continuing trials and tests (the ship will not be formally handed over to the Royal Navy until the end of next year).

"All eyes will be on Daring as she heads out to sea for the first time," said BAE's head of Surface Fleet Solutions Vic Emery.

"This is a very exciting period – we will finally get the opportunity to see exactly what Daring is made of."

Experts are already getting to see what new landing support ship RFA Lyme Bay is made of.

The fourth and last of the Bay class, ordered by Whitehall to replace the venerable 'Knights of the Round Table', sailed past Daring and Dauntless at Scotstoun to begin sea trials.

Before leaving the Clyde for the first – and last – time, Lyme Bay received a glowing bill of health

from Whitehall.

Inspectors from the MOD and the Defence Equipment & Support organisation pored over the ship. At the end of his team's inspection, assessor Andy Britton proclaimed the ship "presented to the best standard we have seen for a long time".

That resounding judgment was the final tick in the box needed for the ship to leave BAE's Govan yard for Falmouth to begin trials, ahead of being officially handed over to the RFA in Portland next month.

"Lyme Bay has been a real labour of love for the people involved," said Allan Smith, ship manager for BAE.

"To receive this level of praise definitely makes it all worthwhile. I'm really proud to be able to put my name to a ship that already has such a great reputation."

"There's nothing quite like watching your work sail off for the first time."

Lyme Bay was the second of two Bay-class ships ordered from Swan Hunter on Tyneside; a further two vessels, Mounts and Cardigan Bays, were ordered from BAE at Govan.

Swan completed Largs Bay, but delays with Lyme forced Whitehall to pull the plug on the Tyne shipyard and send the semi-complete ship up the Clyde for BAE to finish off.

All four are considerably larger than the Knights and more capable of supporting troops ashore, thanks not least to their huge loading dock and landing craft.

● In the Lyme-light... RFA Lyme Bay sails past HMS Daring (nearest the camera) and Dauntless at Scotstoun



From disasters to birthdays

IF HER Majesty can enjoy two birthdays, why not a warship flying the flag in her name around the Caribbean?

The men and women of helicopter carrier HMS Ocean have twice marked the monarch's 81st birthday as the ship's island-hopping drugbusting deployment continues.

First up were the British Virgin Islands (population 22,000) who commemorated the royal occasion by parading in front of Governor David Pearey.

Ocean's sailors turned out in whites for the occasion, marching alongside members of the local defence force,

coastguard, prison service and many others.

Towards the end of the parade there was a flypast by a Sea King from 854 NAS and a Merlin from 700M NAS (pictured here by Ocean's LA(Phot) Ray Jones).

After another stint searching for drug traffickers (the *raison d'être* of Ocean's four-month deployment to the region) Britain's largest warship arrived in Port of Spain, Trinidad, for that island's celebrations of the Queen's birthday, notably an

official reception aboard the flat-top.

It has, of course, not been all parades and parties for the 520 sailors, aircrew and Royal Marines who comprise Ocean's ship's company.

Onahumblernote, the sports-oriented sections of the ship's company trotted out on the football pitch for tournament in aid of the charity Childline.

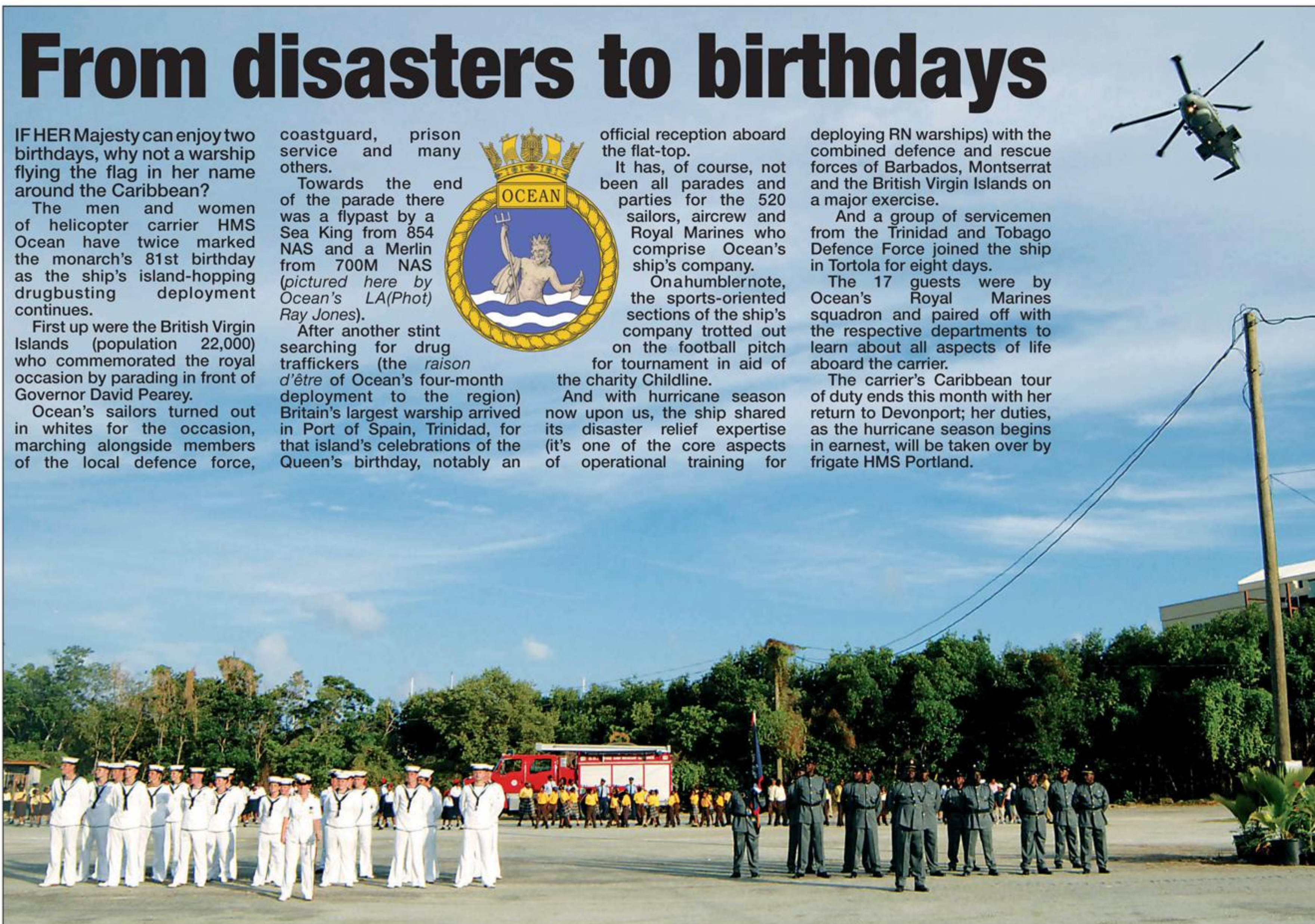
And with hurricane season now upon us, the ship shared its disaster relief expertise (it's one of the core aspects of operational training for

deploying RN warships) with the combined defence and rescue forces of Barbados, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands on a major exercise.

And a group of servicemen from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force joined the ship in Tortola for eight days.

The 17 guests were by Ocean's Royal Marines squadron and paired off with the respective departments to learn about all aspects of life aboard the carrier.

The carrier's Caribbean tour of duty ends this month with her return to Devonport; her duties, as the hurricane season begins in earnest, will be taken over by frigate HMS Portland.





● The Dirty Dozen Plus Six, representing the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester, at full pelt during a run at HMS Collingwood

Picture: K. Woodland (MWS)

Big day goes with a bang



THE GLORY went to HMS Nelson but the plaudits to the organisers of the spectacular Field Gun 100 Day at HMS Collingwood.

The centrepiece of the day was the final of the Brickwood Trophy competition, and the Portsmouth establishment beat HMS Heron and HMS Collingwood A respectively to take the top prize.

That helped make up for

Nelson's dramatic final defeat to the host team in 2006.

"The crew have worked very hard for their victory – I want to make sure they enjoy it," said Field Gun Officer Lt Cdr Mel Robinson.

This year marks the centenary of the Field Gun competition, which commemorates the exploits of Navy gunners who dragged artillery guns overland in the Boer War.

This year saw 21 teams in the frame; apart from the top three there were entries from MOD Abbey Wood, HMS Ark Royal, BRNC, HMS Caledonia, HMS Collingwood B, RAF Cosford, RNAS Culdrose, Devonport Naval Base, Defence Medical Services Training Centre, RN Gibraltar, Joint Force Harrier, MCTC Colchester, UK National Support Unit Naples, HMS Neptune, HMS Raleigh, 7 Air Assault Battalion REME and HMS Sultan.

But there was much more to see beside the thrills of the gun runs.

On a hot, sunny day there was an impressive attendance, with a vast range of attractions from funfair to careers advice, and plenty of military hardware to clamber over.

One crowd-pleaser was the unidentified Brickwood team which warmed up for the arena with a spirited version of the Hokey-Cokey...

● The Defence Medical Services Training Centre team in action (left)



● Visitors to HMS Collingwood watch the Red Arrows display

Detainees on the run

A GROUP of men on the run from the Glasshouse would normally attract interest – and that was the case at Collingwood, where just such a team received plenty of support from onlookers.

The team from the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) at Colchester – who ran as the Dirty Dozen plus Six – were trained by Navy PTI PO Topsy Turner, who said the needs of the sport matched the ethos of the MCTC, where SUSes (Service personnel Under Sentence) are given the chance to regain their passion for the military life and to improve skills such as leadership, discipline and teamwork.

Of the squad of 27, 16 were detainees and the remainder staff.

● The Portsmouth team races home on their way to victory in the Brickwood Trophy contest

Topsy said: "They are all volunteers and they are brilliant – a cracking bunch of lads who have perhaps become misguided and need to find themselves."

Army Capt Alisa Scott was the team's Field Gun Officer, and said the training and competition would help with the detainees' self-esteem.

Capt Scott said most of them were in Colchester for relatively minor offences, the majority for being absent without leave.

But there were no fears about team members going AWOL at Collingwood on MCTC's public debut.

"They would be letting their mates down if they disappeared now," said Capt Scott.

"They should be able to go back to MCTC with their heads held high."



Baby Stokers at HMS Sultan are taking their ship to sea. The training of the new generation of ETMEs has ditched the 'learn and bin' classroom approach in favour of hands-on work in real engines in realistic environments, all backed up by the latest in computer-based training nestled in a package called the Buzzing Hub.

At the hub of change

IN THE not too distant past, trainee Stokers learnt their trade sat in Victorian-style classrooms, while a senior rate with a long stick pointed out the parts of an engine and taught them lists of names, with nothing to look forward to but another 18 weeks of 'death by powerpoint'.

Now the ETMEs of HMS Sultan clamber around amid the grease and grime of real engines, spanner in hand, soaking themselves with water, dropping screws through the deckplates into the Spaghetti Junction of pipes below.

Or they sit in front of flat-panel monitors as 3D graphics spin and chart the flow of liquid through the different valves of the engineer's world.

And in a year's time, they'll be picking up their handheld computers to look up the finer details of engine-room etiquette or play back the podcasts of their instructor's words.

"Technology is moving at a pace which is almost unstoppable. We know that the young use those technologies – and we weren't," said Capt Jonathan Woodcock, the head of the Royal Navy's School of Marine Engineering at HMS Sultan.

"If we failed to meet their expectations, they would not see the Navy as something new, modern and exciting. In general, those who choose to join the Navy rather than go to college did so because they didn't expect to spend days and days stuck in a classroom."

Two years ago when the captain first arrived at the engineering school, instructors and trainees were trapped in a classroom. But there was a strong feeling among his staff that things needed to change.

And the captain called together a small team, led by Lt Sven Johansen and WO1 Darby Allen, to make sure that the training at his school better fulfilled the needs of the Fleet and better matched the expectations of the 16-34 year olds under his wing.

The team worked with experts from the Department for Education and Skills and from Flagship to restructure the approach to training with the introduction of the new Engineering Technician branch.

Eighteen months ago there wasn't a single computer with internet-access available for the trainees.

Now there are 300 web-enabled computers offering

training through a dedicated teaching package called the Buzzing Hub.

Now there are realistic environments full of pipes and electrical cables for the trainees to trace and mend, and time among the engines of the Navy's ships.

Now there is a divisional structure that better reflects life on ship.

And now the Fleet is sending back messages of thanks for the level of confidence and ability of the Engineering Technicians arriving on ship.

And now the loss rate from the ETME course at Sultan has been cut by over two-thirds.

It's a solid result for the school's newest incarnation of stokers.

This year 250 general service and 80 submariners will pass through the ET initial career course at Sultan's Marine Engineering School.

The trainees are taken through a structured 18-week programme which takes them from their individual computer-screens in the classroom to real engines on the shopfloor, cabin scenarios and out on ship, then back to the computers to reinforce the practical.

It's a fact of the modern world that many of the trainee engineers have never done any practical engineering, never taken an engine apart. But they can find their way around the labyrinth of the internet with deft fingers.

The transformation of training at HMS Sultan now better meets their needs and expectations, balancing the tools they have used every day – the mouse and the computer – with the tools with which they have had sporadic contact – the spanner and the screwdriver.

The Buzzing Hub is available on the 300 computers scattered through the technical site of HMS Sultan, and work is in hand to create a wireless network so that trainees can pick up the training package on their own laptops back in the accommodation.

ETME John Enninfu said: "I find it very very useful because if you get lost during the instruction here you can go away and go over it again on the Hub."

"We've gone into a new world," said ETME Anthony Davies, "but the computer-based training has made it easier. It's good that they simplify it so well."

The training at Sultan is split some 60:40 between the practical and the classroom now, but the team at Sultan are determined to push that even further in favour of the hands-on work.

As trainee submariners clamber through the piperoom of HMS Bristol, ETME(SM) Stephen



● ETME(SM) Christopher Jelley tracing systems in the gear room of HMS Bristol

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden

Coulter says with a grin: "Fifteen minutes in here are better than hours in the classroom."

CPOET(ME) 'Bum' Brumfield, the self-styled Head Diesel Weasel or in his official role an instructor at Sultan, runs through the practical elements of valves in the workshop on board HMS Bristol then takes them down in the bowels of the old ship to work on the reality.

And it is reality as water pours from a valve that hasn't been properly set.

He said: "They enjoy this side of it and they get bogged down with the theory. But here they are doing what they want to do."

"It's the best way I ever learnt, to learn from your own mistakes is how you remember."

He added: "We've got young guys who've come straight out of school with A-level physics. But he hasn't got a Scooby. And you've got the guy who's been using a spanner for years but hasn't got an exam to his name."

"They all learn off their mates."

It's the first thing I tell them – 'You are a team. Work together.'

Bristol and her aged steamroom may not seem the exact match for the Navy's upcoming fleet of future destroyers and carriers.

But Brum shrugs, "Yes, this is a steamroom, they'll never go down a working one like this in the Fleet. But it's got the same pipes, lumps and bumps. And that's what they need to know."

"In the electrical training area, things like changing fuses – well, it's not difficult but there is a process," said Capt Woodcock.

"In a classroom you can pass an exam with 75 per cent. But still kill yourself on board ship. But if you do it practically, you repeat the process and in time it becomes instinctive."

Within Faraday Block, the centre of the electrical training, after suitable groundwork in the classrooms ETMEs move between ten stances of scenario-based training, from galley to officer's cabin, from exterior lighting to ship's boats engines.

ETME Chris Somers is over half way through the 18-week course, clutching the vital electrical test equipment in his hand – "I enjoy it a hundred times more in here than being sent into a classroom. It keeps your mind ticking."

One of the main focuses of the work at Sultan has been to make sure that the up-and-coming Stokers have a solid understanding of Naval life on board ship.

Killicks, POs and Chiefs are all part of their daily life with the divisional structure and the support that it offers to trainees and their families stressed.

Time on board stone frigate Sultan and ship Bristol also establishes the niceties of Naval life, even down to the minor details of flip-flops on board ship.

"Bristol is not a modern ship," said Capt Woodcock. "It's not a modern Type 45 – I'd love it to be, but it's not going to happen. But Bristol's got lots of the fundamentals – hatches, bilges, pumps and pipes."

"They live on board and that way we get across the fundamentals of what life is like on ship."

All the work of the previous 18 weeks is bundled up into the final trial of consolidation, where the trainees are taken from station and told "Right, you show me how this works."

Despite the testing nature of the final day of consolidation, the trainee engineers are very upbeat about their futures and the skills they've gained at Sultan.

ETME Thelma Mandebvu said: "I think it's amazing how you acquire so much knowledge over 18 weeks of training. I've enjoyed it because it has been challenging mentally. We get experience both ways, both practical and theory."

"I find the Buzzing Hub fascinating. It's much easier to prepare for an exam using that. And much more motivating than reading from a book."

"I was reading today about the man-below system when I realised that we'd done that on ship on Bristol."

Most of the trainees had spent the previous evening huddled around the computers of the Buzzing Hub going over the work of the last 18 weeks.

Groups had come together with individuals supporting each other according to their strengths, whether bookworm or greasemonkey.

Let's leave the last word to ETME Shane Hamilton – "We're a family. We help each other."



Picture: LA(Phot) Judy Hurst

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Not lost in transition

THE training of Iraq's new navy has stepped up a gear with the arrival of RFA Sir Bedivere as the fledgling fleet's mother ship.

The venerable landing support ship has replaced RFA Diligence as the training vessel used by Iraqi sailors to hone their skills ahead of assuming defensive duties in the northern Arabian Gulf.

Anyone who has sailed the Khawr Abd Allah (God's Highway) into Umm Qasr knows that it's a lengthy (and fairly tedious) journey.

Using a mother ship stationed in the Gulf saves transiting time – and hence allows more time for training.

But Bedivere is more than a floating pontoon or garage – although the Iraqis make full use of her for refuelling and re-supplying.

"Bedivere allows much more training to be conducted at sea," explains Capt Tim Stockings, the RN officer currently in charge of the Naval Transition Team (NaTT) which is training the Iraqi Navy. "She allows lessons in fire-fighting, damage control, navigation, command and control. The 'sea sense' the Iraqi sailors and marines are developing is all part of building for the future."

That 'building for the future' will eventually mean the Iraqi Navy will patrol its own waters and defend the two oil distribution platforms at the head of the Gulf.

It's a task which will be aided next year by the arrival of the first of 21 new patrol ships.

"The Iraqis are fast learners and are determined to succeed so that they can play a bigger part in the future security of their country," said Capt Stockings.



● Iraqi officers receive navigational instruction from a NaTT sailor

The 60-strong NaTT team comprises experts drawn from the RN, RM, British Army, US Army, Navy and Marine Corps and the US Coast Guard, all based in Umm Qasr, Iraq's principal deep-water port.

The Naval Transition Team has been an ever-present feature in Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein, since which time the new navy has made considerable strides.

"In a country where bad news often dominates the headlines, the work done by our small coalition team stands out as a truly 'good news story'," Capt Stockings added.

"Living and working with the Iraqi Navy is an extraordinary experience – and a great privilege. Here at NaTT we are delivering today and building for tomorrow."

You can follow the work of NaTT at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/NaTT

■ FRESH from her £12m refit, aviation training and casualty treatment ship RFA Argus has begun intensive trials and exercises to prepare her for a mission to the Gulf towards the year's end.

Experts from the Flag Officer Sea Training in Devonport threw pretty much everything bar the kitchen sink at Argus' ship's company, from relatively straightforward manoeuvres such as refuelling with tanker RFA Black Rover, to coping with collisions at sea, fire and a helicopter crash on her sprawling flight deck.

Argus has been out of action for the past 12 months while A&P in Falmouth, the ship's home port, revamped her hospital facilities, communications systems and aviation support.

Although the hi-tech hospital is probably the most eye-catching aspect of the ship to visitors, most of Argus' time is spent training helicopter crews in the art of living and operating at sea.

The 28,000-tonne ship is due to deploy to the Gulf and Indian Ocean in the autumn in support of anti-terrorism work.

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● Swede dreams... Alongside in Gothenburg ahead of Noble Mariner are (L-R) HMS Manchester, RFA Mounts Bay and Largs Bay, HMS Roebuck, HMS Albion, BNS Godetia and ENS Admiral Pitka
Picture: PO(Phot) Brad Bradbury, NATO Northwood



This Noble adventure

NEVER have the Allied nations of the Western World been more ready to strike resolutely, with purpose, with punch than at this moment.

For the sword of NATO is currently at its sharpest, the warrior brandishing it at his leanest, his most alert, his skills honed almost to perfection.

Why? Because the 'sword' – the NATO Response Force or NRF – has been put through its sternest test from the grey, murky waters of the Kattegat to the shores of Pomerania and the sweeping Bay of Gdansk.

More than 10,000 sailors, soldiers and airmen from 19 friendly nations took part in the trinity of Noble Mariner (the naval element), Noble Award (air) and Kindred Sword (ground), a trinity intended to test the response force's readiness for a true deployment.

We are, as is our wont, interested in Noble Mariner, not least because the Royal Navy provided the largest single presence – and because it was in charge from HMS Ark Royal.

It's one of the biggest naval force Britain has mustered in recent years and it has offered the RN vessels involved a double training opportunity: realistic, large-scale operations, with the added bonus of working side-by-side with a multitude of nationalities.

Ten nationalities, to be precise, as far as the naval element is concerned, under the direction of Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, UK Maritime Force Commander and, for the duration of this exercise, the Allied naval supremo.

"I don't think I've ever had five task groups under my command before," says the admiral, undaunted. "There are a lot of ships out there. It's a great opportunity and, for the Royal Navy, this is an environment we don't often operate in."

Flagship Ark Royal and her sister Illustrious, providing the air-ground punch courtesy of her Harriers from the Naval Strike Wing, were obviously high-value targets for the enemy.

German frigate FGS Sachsen attempted to slip through the screen of warships mustered around Illustrious by night to attack the flat-top... only to be spotted by the eyes in the sky of 849

THE largest combined air, sea and ground force mustered by Allied nations this year gathered in the waters between Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Poland to prove it was capable of responding to a major international crisis under the banner of NATO's Response Force. **RICHARD HARGREAVES** reports on the opening stage of Exercise Noble Mariner in Denmark.

NAS and their Bagger Sea Kings.

Working with Allies brings a whole new dimension to military operations.

There are no, or rather few, language barriers: English, fortunately for us, is the language of NATO.

Other barriers prove more challenging. As a confederacy of 26 nations, NATO has 26 different armies, navies and air forces, all with slightly different traditions, ways of working and equipment.

The front end, the ships launching helicopters and jets or pummeling ground positions with their guns, the marines and soldiers storming ashore, the aircraft sending bombs spinning into enemy bunkers grab the headlines – and the glory – but it's the less sexy aspects which ensure success.

Key to Noble Mariner is logistics, the tail behind the teeth. The RN traditionally relies on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary for most of its support needs, and the RFA is here on Noble Mariner in force.

But as an international operation, the task force is making use of an international supply chain.

"People have to be fed, water, food and ammunition are required," explains Admiral Morisetti. "The question is: will Country A trust Country B to provide their logistical support?"

The Royal Marines at least have innate support in the form of RFAs Largs and Mounts Bays.

Two companies of green berets of 40

Cdo set up shop on the former ahead of the amphibious phase of the exercise.

In simple terms, the Royals are Largs Bay's 'weapons system', thrust ashore on her landing craft or by helicopter.

"What do we think of this ship?" Lt Col Mark Searight, Largs Bay's amphibious operations officer asks rhetorically. "We like it. It's modern, spacious, there's a fab gym and great flight deck for keeping fit."

"It's been built ergonomically – there's easy access, doors you can fit through. It's infinitely better than what has gone before."

Lt Col Searight and his chief assault guide WO2 Dai Charles work out the minutiae of putting ashore 360 green berets with all the right kit in the right order.

For the big picture you have to hop across to the Dutch air defence frigate HNLMS De Ruyter – a sort of Netherlands Type 45 – where Lt Gen Tony van Diepenbrugge and his staff direct ground operations on a huge scale from a makeshift command centre.

A myriad of laptops operated by a myriad of nationalities – Dutch, Danes, Italians, Germans, Britons – follow the movements of friend and foe. Fittingly, there's a copy of the book *Band of Brothers* lying on a table alongside a chart.

"It's interesting being at sea," says General van Diepenbrugge. "But it's not easy. We get seasick. We just take pills."

His experience at sea has been eye-opening for other reasons, too.

"Why doesn't every ship have a bright operations room?" he asks. Why indeed...

De Ruyter – "the pearl of the Dutch Navy" says her captain – is an impressive ship, a glimpse into tomorrow's Navy. There are wide passageways, bright operations rooms, silos filled with surface-to-air missiles.

There's a female CO too, *Kapiteinluitenant-ter-zee* (Commander) Jeanette Morang; women have been going to see in the Royal Netherlands Navy for slightly longer than in the RN.

Nevertheless Cdr Morang is the first female captain of a frigate in her navy's illustrious history and the Dutch press made a fuss accordingly.

In her ship there are traditions and traits many RN men and women would instantly recognise. The uniforms, for a start, are remarkably similar to the Senior Service. There are days set aside for specific meals: fish on a Friday, Indonesian (given Holland's colonial past) on a Wednesday.

And there are some things typically Dutch. There is a galley and a bakery, where the baker prepares seven varieties of bread.

And sprinkled liberally around the ship are condom dispensers. Well, I suppose you should always be ready for action...

40 Commando go fishing, overleaf

THE NATO Response Force is a relatively new formation, born of the Allied forces' need to find a fresh role in the post-Cold War world.

For four decades, Britain, Germany, the US and other friendly powers sat and waited for the Red Bear to come... only (mercifully) he didn't.

So what does the combined air, sea and land might of 26 Allied nations now do?

Why, it combines to form an international force for good, a sort of global John Harvey-Jones which could be called upon to troubleshoot in hotspots by enforcing embargoes, evacuating civilians, sabre rattling to keep tyrants in check, or providing humanitarian aid after a disaster.

As of yet, the NRF has not been called upon in a real crisis, but then it only officially stood up last autumn.

"The NRF is not a glint in the eye of NATO headquarters in Brussels. It's a very real force," stresses Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Maritime Component Commander and, for the sake of this three-pronged exercise, in overall charge.

The response force is expected to move en masse at five to 30 days' notice, and sustain itself on an operation for at least 30 days.

But before the force can move an inch, however, it needs the authorisation of all 26 NATO nations – truly a challenge for the diplomats.

Getting 26 countries to agree on anything is tricky, but when it comes to potential conflict, the difficulties multiply.

But, on the plus side, if the NRF is committed then it does so with the authority of 26 of the world's most powerful and influential nations.



● HMS Manchester follows RFA Largs Bay and Mounts Bay under the Great Belt Bridge between Sweden and Denmark as seen from HMS Albion

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion



● Look back in anchor... A green beret glances back along a straight country lane during an exercise to evacuate civilians as Noble Mariner reaches its climax



● Smokin' aces... (Above) Smoke from a 105mm gun of 29 Commando Regiment RA drifts across the Danish scrubland and (left) a Danish soldier pauses while his Royal Marine comrades confer in the shadow of an Atlantikwall bunker

A spot of FISHing

IN THE Royal Navy everyone knows there's fish on Friday.

You can set your watch by it. So too in the green berets. But there's a good chance you'll encounter it on every other day of the week too.

FISH is the less-than-subtle (and not entirely official) acronym for what is becoming the green beret's new area of expertise: Fighting In Someone's House. (More accurately, and more officially, it's OBUA – Operations in a Built-Up Area; it was, until recently, FIBUA – Fighting In a Built-Up Area.)

So where do you go FISHing in Denmark, then? Why, near the country's principal fishing port, Esbjerg, of course, specifically Danish Army ranges near the small town of Oxsbøl.

Maj Alex Murray, 40 Cdo's second-in-command, is our (entertaining) tour guide as we roll through the rather barren Jutland countryside – our guide when his chicken's not squawking (his mobile phone has a tone which sounds like a bird being strangled).

"And if you look to your right, you will see Danish 155mm howitzers drawn up," he points out.

No scenic vistas or great cathedrals here. Oh no, we're here to fight. (Actually, the Royals are here to fight, we're here to watch them.)

And this is rather a fine place for fighting. Maj Murray raves about the ranges near Esbjerg: "The training we have had is second to none. We cannot get enough of this place."

'We' are his men, referred to repeatedly as "warrior monks". Not sure about the monk bit, but the warriors are very much in evidence...

Soldiers and marines do not like FISH. Why? Because it offers all the advantages to the defender and none to the attacker.

"For every one defender you need ten assault troops," explains Maj Dan Cheeseman.

Maj Cheeseman leads Bravo Company – about to fight its way through a village with Danish light reconnaissance troops.

Numbers tell only half the story, however, when it comes to fighting in towns.

As soon as a building is turned into rubble, it becomes a rabbit warren for the defender – witness Stalingrad or Berlin as proof.

Add to that buildings blocking

line of sight, interfering with radio transmissions, the threat of booby traps, terrified civilians trying to escape the fighting, dashing through the crossfire.

"This is the hardest thing we do," says Maj Cheeseman.

"It's also the thing we need to do most of."

You cannot, of course, blast your way through the streets of Taunton, the nearest major town to 40 Commando's home, to train for such fighting.

Fortunately, there are artificial towns designed solely for the military.

Brickby is the Danish counterpart of Copehill Down, the mock European village on Salisbury Plain, which prepares British troops for operations on the Continent.

It has everything a village should have. Expansive village square. A school. Farmsteads. Town houses.

And it has some things no village should have: rather nasty chaps wearing balaclavas and thick green jumpers brandishing rifles.

As a spectacle, it is mesmerising. Loud, smelly – there's an odour similar to burnt fireworks drifting through Brickby – chaotic.

Royals abseil from an 847 Naval Air Squadron Lynx at one end of the town. They are soon masked by smoke shells, followed by 4.5in shells from HMS Manchester smashing into the Danish soil.

The balaclava-clad enemy in the town square leap up and begin shooting in the direction of the four marines who landed by rope... only the main assault comes not from the north but from the west.

The commandos advance in small groups, mortars and shell fire covering their advance.

A green beret (his world-renowned cap has been replaced in battle by a helmet) leans a metal ladder against the outside wall of a house, then clambers up and inside a window to begin smoking out the foe.

Of course, the enemy isn't always so obliging as to leave a window or door open.

If there isn't an obvious opening, make one.

Mousehole charges – two pieces of wood forming an 'X' with charges on all four ends – punch a small hole (but rather larger than a mousehole) through a brick wall.



Already the experience of their brethren in and 45 Commando in Afghanistan is being passed on. 40 Commando (who will deploy to Helmand with NATO in due course) makeshift explosives some cases proved too weak to smash their way through the thick walls of Taleb compounds.

The next step up is a vertical charge, a demolition bar, an 18 charge fixed flush to a wall, the bang.

But then it's one bang among many in this urban battle.

There are flashes, bangs, a wispy white smoke billow through Brickby.

The tat-tat-tat of the Royal SA80s mingles with the tat-tat-tat of the enemy's weapons.

There's the chug-chug-chug of Danish soldiers in jeeps firing at the enemy with their heavy machine-guns.

A Lynx drops in on a rooftop to pick up a casualty. With each crump of a 4.5in shell landing a shudder goes through your heart.

A hysterical Brickbyer skips across the town square, hands covering his face.

And when it is all over, there are bodies strewn on the ground. The walls of houses are charred. The floors of rooms are littered with spent shell cases. The smoke and smell of battle lingers.

This is fighting in every dimension.

It is not merely a question of co-ordinating commandos fighting from building to building.

You have to organise engineers to carry out demolitions.

Helicopters or Land Rover must be on hand to pluck the wounded to safety. Strikes jets have to be co-ordinated with artillery barrages and infantry attacks.

There are the guns of ships on shore to throw into the mix.

And when the battle is won, the troops must rest and eat.

War, of course, does not always take place in towns. The Royal Marines are, first and foremost, amphibious troops.

And so a handful of miles from Brickby, they practise what they do best: coming ashore from the sea to seize a beachhead.

At the heart of modern amphibious operations is the mobile operations group: motorised company of Royal – in this case Charlie Compa



● **Forward!** A corporal in 40 Commando screams orders during the assault at the Oksbøl ranges near Esbjerg and (right) Ladder 40... Royals scramble into a building in Brickby during the 'FISHing' element of Noble Mariner

– with artillery and air support.

The infantry roll down a sandy track in the midst of dune country a dozen or so miles northwest of Esbjerg, when crack, a mine explodes.

The column grinds to a halt. The Royals dismount and the tat-tat-tat begins, this time aimed at an innocuous-looking hillock a couple of hundred yards from our vantage point atop the *Biøffelstilling* – Buffalo Position – a concrete emplacement with walls up to 30ft thick, a good couple of miles from the North Sea.

Once it was a command bunker in Hitler's vaunted *Atlantikwall*; today German holidaymakers on a nearby camp complain that this grey decaying structure is a blot on the landscape. Their protestations subside when they learn who built it...

105mm artillery shells and 81mm mortars crash down on the hill top. The noise is not a loud bang but a duller thud. There's a short flash of flame, no huge explosion, but there are dense clouds of black smoke which envelop the hillock.

"To have all the guns firing at one time is an incredible sight – you can feel the boom of the bursts and get a feeling for their effect," says L/Bdr Iain Chanter of 8 Battery, 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery.

With a fully worked-up crew, you can be punishing the enemy with ten shells a minute. More realistically, a ten-minute barrage with 60 or 70 rounds crashing down around an enemy position should have the desired effect.

There is one problem, however, on these ranges. The undulating dunes and scrub covering the terrain make spotting and judging the enemy's range rather difficult.

Still, if the 105s don't do the trick, there's always the 81mm mortars – the one guaranteed indirect weapon any RM company can rely upon in battle.

Drawn up on the back of BVs,

typically with a crew of just three men, the mortars can be deployed and firing within a mere 180 seconds.

"The effect is impressive," says Cpl Matthew Bentley.

"A high-explosive round has a killing zone of 40 metres." (*That's about 130ft – Ed.*) "With all three mortars firing, that's a killing zone 120 metres long."

HMS Manchester now weighs in. For safety reasons, her 4.5in shells land a good three miles away. They do spark a bright flash on Danish soil. And a few seconds later the airwaves carry the loud crack of each shell impacting to the audience atop the concrete watchtower.

There is, our 'commentator' Maj Mike Tanner from 40 Cdo's command company, points out "no movement without fire, no fire without movement".

Among those moving forward is Cpl Andrew Fox, a section commander, with his men, armed *inter alia* with the Minimi small machine-gun, which can deliver up to 25 rounds a minute, delivered from the hip, or from a fixed position.

"There is a lot more to be gained from live firing than using blanks. You see just how enormous our firepower is," the corporal explains.

From the perch of our viewing platform, this is all looks rather good fun, our very own private Hollywood blockbuster.

On the ground, there is no such frivolity or flippancy.

"You have to take it seriously – if you don't take it seriously now then you will be in trouble when it comes for real," Cpl Fox points out.

Pictures by
PO(Phot) Brad Bradbury, NATO Northwood, and
LA(Phot) Andy Hibberd, 40 Commando





London's last blast

COMMANDER Mike Riley points out (*Letters*, June) that HMS Zulu fired the last RN broadside in 1984.

I agree with him on that point. This was the last twin turret two-gun broadside.

HMS Zulu was equipped with the single gun open Mk 5 mountings fore and aft.

HMS London's broadside (December 10 1981) was in fact the last four gun broadside.

HMS London was equipped with later twin gun 4.5in Mk 6 turrets. I remember it quite well and was B turret maintainer at the time.

Certainly Cdr Riley would have been the last to report A and Y mountings correct – for HMS London, it would have been A and B turrets correct.

– Lt Cdr Guy Nicholls, Admiralty Interview Board

Pension pot-boiler

REFERRING to Mr Sexton's letter (June) regarding payment protection, I am in a similar situation, the difference is that he has been misinformed.

Although due to his Naval pension he isn't entitled to Jobseeker's Allowance, if he was in full employment and paying his stamp, he could be entitled to Contributory Jobseeker's Allowance for six months based on his NI contributions.

With regards to payment protection, he should be still signing on and completing either form ABI1 or the ones from his insurers.

Although he gets no money, the ABI1 is his proof of unemployment and his insurers should pay on that and more importantly it will generate a National Insurance Credit, to make sure his pension pot isn't short when he reaches 65.

Please pass on this information – I hate to see ex-matelots being caught out by receiving duff information.

– C Macdonald, ex RN, Derby



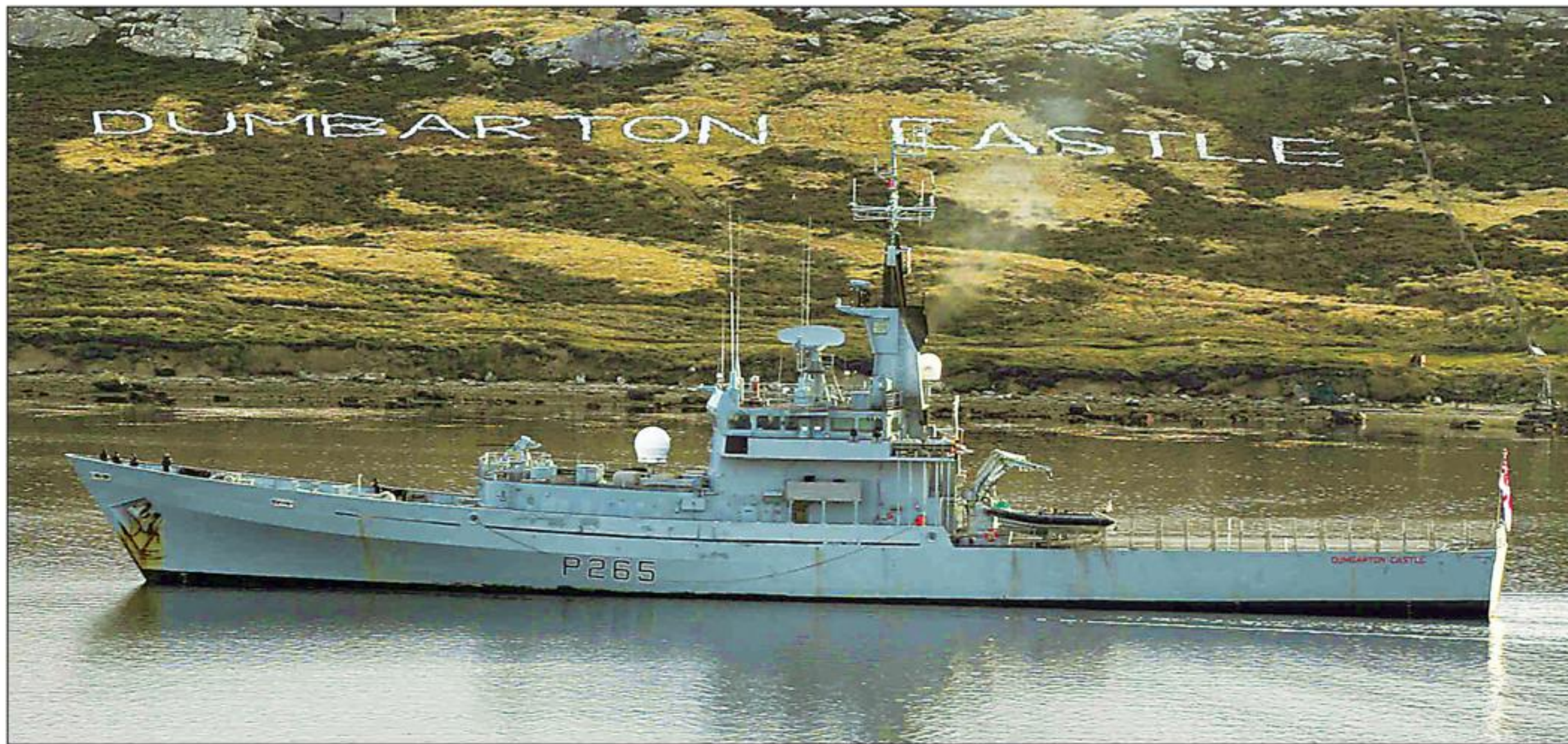
● The renowned Just Nuisance gazing out to sea

Jack's best oppo

A FRIEND just back from Cape Town took this photo of one of Jack's best oppos there in World War 2 – AB Just Nuisance.

I bet all the lads who were there remember him.

– Stan Elmes, Basildon, Essex



● We looked on Google Earth and could not see Lynx, although the other names were clear. However, sailors from HMS Dumbarton Castle (above) dug their stones out of Pony Pass quarry, so if anyone did nick the stones it wasn't them...

The missing Lynx?

THERE was no mention in the article about Dumbarton Castle (June) of the ships' names on the slopes opposite Port Stanley.

There was no mention of HMS Lynx and I was wondering if it was still on the hillside or whether some rogues had nicked the stones to help write their ship's name?

In 1964, HMS Lynx had just passed through the Panama Canal

and was about to visit Guayaquil when we were ordered to proceed post-haste to the Falkland Islands, fuelling at Valparaíso and Punta Arenas on the way. Back into the Atlantic without a run ashore.

My advice to anyone going south is to pick a vessel with the short name composed of straight lines. Makes rock-shifting easier.

– Roger Breakwell, Portsmouth

Diamond's name promises lustre

WHEN the city of Sheffield was offered an affiliation with the new Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond the Lord Mayor turned down the offer without putting it to the people of Sheffield.

Some people were asked for their opinion on the decision, with some saying any connection with the Royal Navy would be a good thing for the city, which I feel would be correct as it is an honour to both the city and the ship, and brings benefit to both in many ways.

The statement that has angered me and my members is the one that the name Diamond is meaningless.

This is an insult to the name and to all former Diamond crew.

It is a very proud name and one that has served the Navy and the country since 1651, serving with Sir Francis Drake at the defeat of the Armada under the command of Capt Robert Holland.

The new Type 45 destroyer to bear the name Diamond will be the 13th ship to serve with the name, which I and all my members are proud of, and proud to be an ex-Diamond crew member.

– Ray 'Legs' Shipley, Chairman, HMS Diamond Association, Gillingham, Kent



● HMS Diamond, the previous destroyer built in 1950

Veterans kept out in the cold

RESTORMAL Borough Council and Newquay put on a spectacular event as a tribute to those who liberated the Falkland Islands 25 years ago, with HMS Exeter looking immaculate.

When I enquired as to what arrangements had been made for the veterans, the apologetic answer was 'none' and I was even discouraged from going down to the harbour, where the ceremonies were being held, which was restricted to 'invited guests only'.

Seeing many holidaymakers in the harbour, I went anyway, wearing my South Atlantic medal.

The opening address welcomed every group you could think of – except veterans.

Chains of office were in abundance, all with badges giving them access to the marquee. Not only were veterans excluded, but as they passed right in front of me, none of the dignitaries even saw fit to acknowledge my presence.

We buried our dead at sea 25 years ago – every wave is their headstone.

I reflected for a while, watching the surf, before leaving early.

This event was clearly not for veterans, and very evidently not planned by the Royal Navy.

– Ian Inskip, Navigating Officer, HMS Glamorgan, 1982

Falklands reflections

WITH reference to your Falklands supplement (May) – yes, HMS Conqueror is the only nuclear submarine to have sunk another vessel (warship) in anger.

However, since 1945, not so. The Pakistani Daphne Class Hangor (Shark) sank the Indian, British-built type 14 frigate Kukri on December 9 1971, with the loss of 211 crew.

The Pakistani submarine Ghazi (formerly USS Diablo) also happens to be the only total loss submarine in action since 1945, believed lost to a mine on December 3 1971. All 82 crew died.

– Sean Smith, Eastleigh

...AFTER all the Falklands celebrations are over, perhaps it would be time to reflect on all those servicemen who served down south before 1982 – the officers and crew of HMS Endurance, Naval Party 8901 and a few others.

Many friendships were built over the years in Port Stanley and the settlements. I myself served in both polar regions on ships and submarines.

Perhaps time for a polar medal? Or even a Falklands bar?

– Peter Fox, Ramsgate, Kent

...In 1951-2 I was serving in the original HMS Sheffield and flagship of the AWI Squadron.

Sometime in 1952, the then president of Argentina, General Peron, made noises regarding the Falklands. So our Marine detachment, less band, was embarked on one of our accompanying frigates and dispatched to Stanley.

Thence, all quiet on the South Atlantic Front.

I do not recall hearing of the Falklands again figuring internationally until the events of 1982.

– P Herlihy, Ruislip

opinion

THE city of Sheffield, which is as far away from the sea as any English city can be, has had long and affectionate links with its affiliated ship,

Even her nickname, the 'Shiny Sheff', is a tribute to the steel city – the original HMS Sheffield, launched in 1936, was the first ship to have her brightwork and ship's bell made of stainless steel instead of the traditional brass.

She was followed by two other HMS Sheffields, and there was great grief and a sense of loss in the city when the second went down in the Falklands in May 1982.

There is to be no new HMS Sheffield, at least not for many years, and it is sad that the nominative link has been lost – as

The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

indeed it has for many other cities – with the gradual phasing-out of the Type-42 destroyers.

But the city of Sheffield has really taken an extraordinary decision in turning down the offer of affiliation with HMS Diamond on the grounds that she is not called Sheffield. Diamond is a most illustrious name in Naval history.

And at the risk of fuelling traditional rivalry between Yorkshire's two largest cities, it's noticeable that one of the strongest affiliations of all is with Leeds, which has not only always loved her affiliated ship, but during the war paid for her to be built – and this despite the fact that she's not named HMS Leeds, but HMS Ark Royal.



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No.636: 54th year

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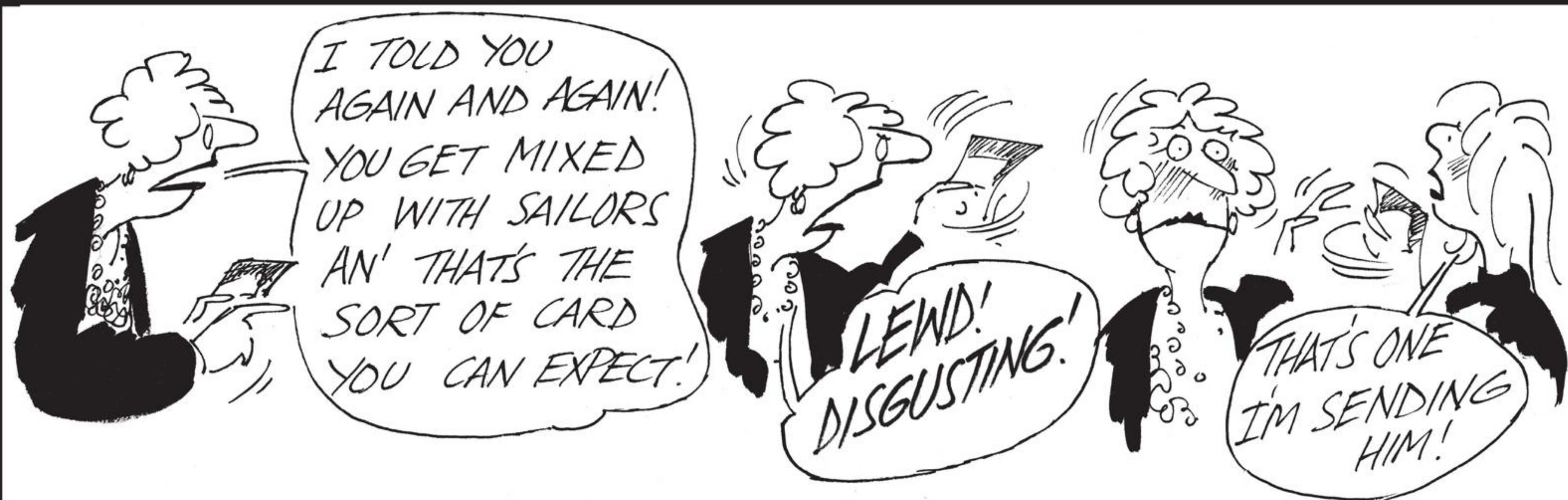
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BY TUGS



● HMS Swiftsure entering Hong Kong harbour at the end of the war. Hong Kong was handed over to the Chinese government 10 years ago, at midnight on June 30 1997

Echo of the past

AFTER seeing the picture of HMS Echo entering Hong Kong harbour (February) I came across this photograph of HMS Swiftsure in what looks like the same stretch of water. It brought back memories of my life in the Royal Navy.

I was a telegraphist on board HMS Newfoundland during 1944-45 in the Pacific. I was fortunate to be in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Japanese on September 2nd and was then transferred to HMS Swiftsure.

We were sent to Hong Kong to receive the surrender of the Japanese, which was signed by Rear Admiral Harcourt on board the Swiftsure for Great Britain.

The cross on the top right of the photo indicates a memorial to the Japanese dead which British prisoners were forced to build. Rear Admiral Harcourt had it blown up on being told what it was.

— D Williams, former Telegraphist, Stoke-on-Trent

Never too late for a medal

I WOULD like to endorse the statement in *Navy News* (February) that it is never too late to apply for a service medal.

My father-in-law, Stoker Frank Still has recently applied for and been awarded the Naval GSM with Minesweeping 1945-51 clasp for his service during 1944-46, 61 years after leaving the Service.

— C E Pascoe, Biggin Hill, Kent

Claims for medals should be sent to:
Service Personnel and Veterans Agency,
Building 250,
RAF Innsworth,
Gloucester GL3 1HW
Free Phone 0800 085 3600

Life begins at 40 knots

MAY I correct your statement (June) that units of the P2000 Archer Class are Fast Patrol Boats?

Warship Type Designators are defined by a NATO Standing Naval Agreement. To qualify for the much-coveted title of fast patrol boat requires a capability of at least 30 knots, the P2000 Archers are barely halfway there.

I had to make this point to the MOD some years ago, when the P2000s suddenly became listed in Broadsheet as Fast Patrol Boats. My point was taken and they were officially re-classified as 'Patrol Boats.'

Between 1971 and 1974 I was CO of HMS Cutlass, which with sister ships Scimitar and Sabre formed the First Fast Training Boat Squadron, of which I was the senior officer, stationed at

Portland and mostly operating for FOST.

The Scimitars, with their two Rolls-Royce Proteus gas turbine engines, were capable of over 40 knots – which led the 'older brethren' of the Squadron to adopt the slogan 'Life Begins at 40' – which also happened to be the title of your article.

Sadly the Scimitars were withdrawn from RN service (as part of economies imposed on FOST) in 1982, but all three ships were sold to Greek commercial interests.

More details are available on the internet – just enter the individual ships' names.

The names Scimitar and Sabre are now carried by two genuine Fast Patrol Boats which form the Gibraltar Squadron.

— Lt Cdr G L Upton (Retd) Torquay

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Given the impressive volume of

letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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IF SOMEONE tells you they have a photograph of all the men and machines of 815 Naval Air Squadron proudly hanging on the wall, nod politely.

Nod politely because they are lying. You will never find all its men and machines together, for they never are.

"There is," its Commanding Officer Cdr Alun Jones says succinctly, "always someone out there."

Indeed there is. On any given day in any given year, there's a Lynx of 815 airborne in foreign skies.

The Yeovilton-based unit is the backbone of all destroyer operations, all Type 22 and several Type 23 frigates, Antarctic survey work by HMS Endurance and counter-drug operations by RFA Wave Ruler.

I use the word 'backbone' deliberately.

That Lynx strapped to the flight deck is no luxury addition to the warship's arsenal.

In fact, arguably, it's the most important weapon aboard.

It's certainly the most used. Sea Dart hasn't been fired in anger in 15 years. The 4.5in main gun hasn't pummeled targets ashore since Iraq, yet a ship's helicopter is airborne pretty much daily on deployment.

Scattering 815 to the four corners of the earth - there are typically ten flights away with their associated ships at any one time - disguises the fact that this is the biggest helicopter squadron not merely in the UK (much to the RAF's chagrin), but also all of Europe too.

"You could say I run the 815 'franchise' and I have 'outlets' in the Gulf, Mediterranean, Caribbean, South Atlantic and so on," explains Cdr Alun Jones, 815's Commanding Officer.

"Each one of those 'outlets' has the 815 standard to live up to."

Each one of those 'outlets' - from 200 Flight (HMS Gloucester) to 239 (HMS Cornwall) - comprises a ten-man (and woman) team.

There is a pilot, an observer, plus a flight controller, plus seven maintainers, ranging from a senior rating who's the chief engineer to an air engineer technician who also doubles as a winchman.

So, while the flights are away, what do those left behind at Yeovilton do?

They improve tactics, they train - there's always new kit to get to grips with - they provide technical support, they give that final front-line edge to flights about to deploy to ships.

In an average month the Lynx at headquarters clock up around 240 hours between them.

But there's also a less formal aspect to the work of headquarters: that of ensuring that this far-flung family feels loved and supported wherever it is, at whatever time of day.

Nothing in military life quite compares with a ship's homecoming, the banners waving, the mini Union Flags fluttering, the Royal Marines Band thumping out Heart of Oak, the tears, the hugs.

Often missing from this nautical jamboree are the flight crew, who have invariably disembarked as their ship sauntered up the Channel or through the Western Approaches.

At 815, they make a point of holding a reception in the foyer, inviting the families, handing out glasses of champagne, in short making everyone feel welcome.

"It's important to remember that we're out there, a small cadre doing a great job, but there's also a lot of support from back home," says Lt Cdr 'Bins' Brayson, one of 815's most experienced pilots.

"You can come into the crew room and see people you've not seen for a year and catch up with some fantastic stories."

Fantastic stories such as three months aboard HMS Bulwark last year.

When the assault ship needed aerial support for her Gulf deployment last year, 815 Lynx were selected.

Continued on page 32

WITH all the attention lavished on their Commando Helicopter Force counterparts by Navy News in recent months, the men and women of 815 Naval Air Squadron - Europe's largest helicopter formation - were feeling a little in the shade. **RICHARD HARGREAVES** visited the squadron at its Yeovilton home to entice it out of the shadows.



226 FLIGHT
HMS KENT

KENT HAS SPENT MOST OF THIS YEAR IN UK WATERS ON A MIXTURE OF CEREMONIAL VISITS AND MAJOR EXERCISES, NOTABLY NEPTUNE WARRIOR IN SCOTLAND.

THE FLIGHT WAS AT 15 MINUTES' NOTICE TO SCRAMBLE THROUGHOUT THE EXERCISE TO FIND AND SINK ENEMY SUBMARINES.

FOR THE FLIGHT'S JUNIOR PILOT, LT IAN BRANNINGHAM, THIS HAS BEEN THE FIRST TASTE OF FRONT-LINE ACTION... AND HIS FIRST TASTE OF DEFENCE WATCHES. HE USED NEPTUNE WARRIOR TO CLOCK UP A MILESTONE IN HIS FLEDGLING CAREER, HIS 100TH DECK LANDING ON THE GERMAN FRIGATE FGS HESSEN.



206 FLIGHT
HMS PORTLAND

THE FRIGATE AND HER FLIGHT HAVE BEGUN A SIX-MONTH DEPLOYMENT TO THE USA, CARIBBEAN AND WEST AFRICA.

TO PREPARE FOR SUCH A MISSION, THE FLIGHT (AND THE SHIP) WERE PUT THROUGH OPERATIONAL SEA TRAINING, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON DISASTER RELIEF/HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS (PORTLAND WILL BE IN THE CARIBBEAN AT THE HEIGHT OF THE HURRICANE SEASON) AND MARITIME SECURITY OPERATIONS, PART OF THE CONSTANT WAR ON DRUG TRAFFICKERS.

JOINING THE FLIGHT FOR THE DEPLOYMENT IS A STUDENT FLIGHT OBSERVER, COMING TO THE END OF TRAINING. THE NINE MONTHS WITH 206 FLIGHT WILL GIVE THEM THE 'ON THE JOB' EXPERIENCE VITAL FOR FRONT-LINE OPERATIONS.



218 FLIGHT
RFA WAVE RULER

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, 218 FLIGHT HAS BEEN DEPLOYED CONSTANTLY ON COUNTER-DRUG OPERATIONS WITH TANKER WAVE RULER.

IN THIS ROLE, THE FLIGHT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL, NOTABLY CATCHING THE FISHING BOAT OLIANA WHICH WAS CARRYING 3.2 TONNES OF COCAINE.

TWO MORE SUCCESSES WERE SCORED WITH SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF DRUGS FOUND ABOARD TWO MORE FISHING BOATS, LADY EDITH AND DONNA MARIE, BRINGING THE FLIGHT'S TOTAL HAUL TO 11 TONNES OF COCAINE.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF FLYING IS CONCENTRATED ON DAWN PATROLS - THIS IS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH THE 'GO FASTS' AND THE BEST CHANCE TO USE THE NIGHT VISION GOGGLES.



208 FLIGHT
HMS SOUTHAMPTON

THE FLIGHT HAS JOINED THE SAINTS ON A LENGTHY DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, VIA THE CARIBBEAN, PANAMA CANAL (THE AIRCRAFT FLEW OVER THE MAN-MADE WATERWAY WHILE THE DESTROYER SAILED DOWN IT), THEN INTO THE PACIFIC BOUND FOR CHILE, WHERE EXERCISES WERE LINED UP WITH THE CHILEAN NAVY.



234 FLIGHT
HMS EDINBURGH

COMMEMORATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT HAS DOMINATED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE 815 TEAM AND THEIR SHIP. EVERY SOUL ABOARD EDINBURGH HAS UNDERSTOOD SOMETHING OF THE SACRIFICES MADE A GENERATION AGO, NOT LEAST BY FLYING VETERANS AROUND.

AS FOR THE FLIGHT ITSELF, IT HAS DEPUTISED FOR THE ISLAND'S RAF SEARCH AND RESCUE SEA KING AND BLASTED AWAY AT GROUND TARGETS WITH ITS 12.7MM HEAVY MACHINE-GUN IN JOINT EXERCISES WITH LOCAL AIR AND GROUND FORCES.



815 in numbers

- 316 ratings
- 75 officers
- 35 Lynx
- 26 flights
- 18 frigates and destroyers to support, plus one Antarctic survey ship (two helicopters) and RFA Wave Ruler
- 10 crew on a ship's flight
- 9 different variants of Lynx Mk3 and Mk8
- 4 operational readiness flights



212 FLIGHT
HMS ENDURANCE

THE TWO LYNXES ATTACHED TO THE RED PLUM HAVE JUST COMPLETED A MARATHON NINE-MONTH DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTHERN OCEAN, DURING WHICH TIME THEY HAVE FLOWN BBC FILM CREWS, THE PRINCESS ROYAL, AND ANTARCTIC SCIENTISTS.

THE FLIERS' LAST MAJOR TASK ON THE ICE WAS TO BUILD A TEN-TONNE FUEL DEPOT ATOP MOUNT HADDINGTON (5,200FT) ON JAMES ROSS ISLAND AND TO RE-SUPPLY SCIENTIFIC BASES AHEAD OF THE AUSTRAL WINTER.

IN WARMER CLIMES, THE FLIGHT HELPED ISLANDERS ON TRISTAN DA CUNHA BUILD A FENCE ON THE SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO WHICH DOMINATES THE ISLAND.



**202 FLIGHT
HMS MANCHESTER**

THE BUSY BEE HAS LARGELY BEEN IN UK WATERS THIS YEAR, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A NATO EXERCISE IN THE BALTIC.

202 FLIGHT JOINED THE SHIP FOR OPERATIONAL SEA TRAINING AND CONCLUDED HER RECENT EMBARKED ACTIVITY WITH A VISIT TO LIVERPOOL.

ON AN EXHILARATING NOTE, THE FLIGHT OBSERVED THE SHIP'S SEA DART TEST FIRING AND ASSISTED IN THE ESCORT OF HMS ILLUSTRIOUS TO THE BALTIC.



**229 FLIGHT
HMS SUTHERLAND**

THE FRIGATE IS COMING TO THE END OF A NINE-MONTH MIDDLE EAST DEPLOYMENT, WHERE HER LYNX HAS ACHIEVED A NEAR 100-PER-CENT SERVICEABILITY RATE, NOTCHING UP 50-60 HOURS IN THE SKIES EACH MONTH.

MOST OF THE AIRCRAFT'S TIME HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO CONDUCTING SURFACE SWEEPS OF GULF WATERS TO PROTECT IRAQ'S OIL PLATFORMS.

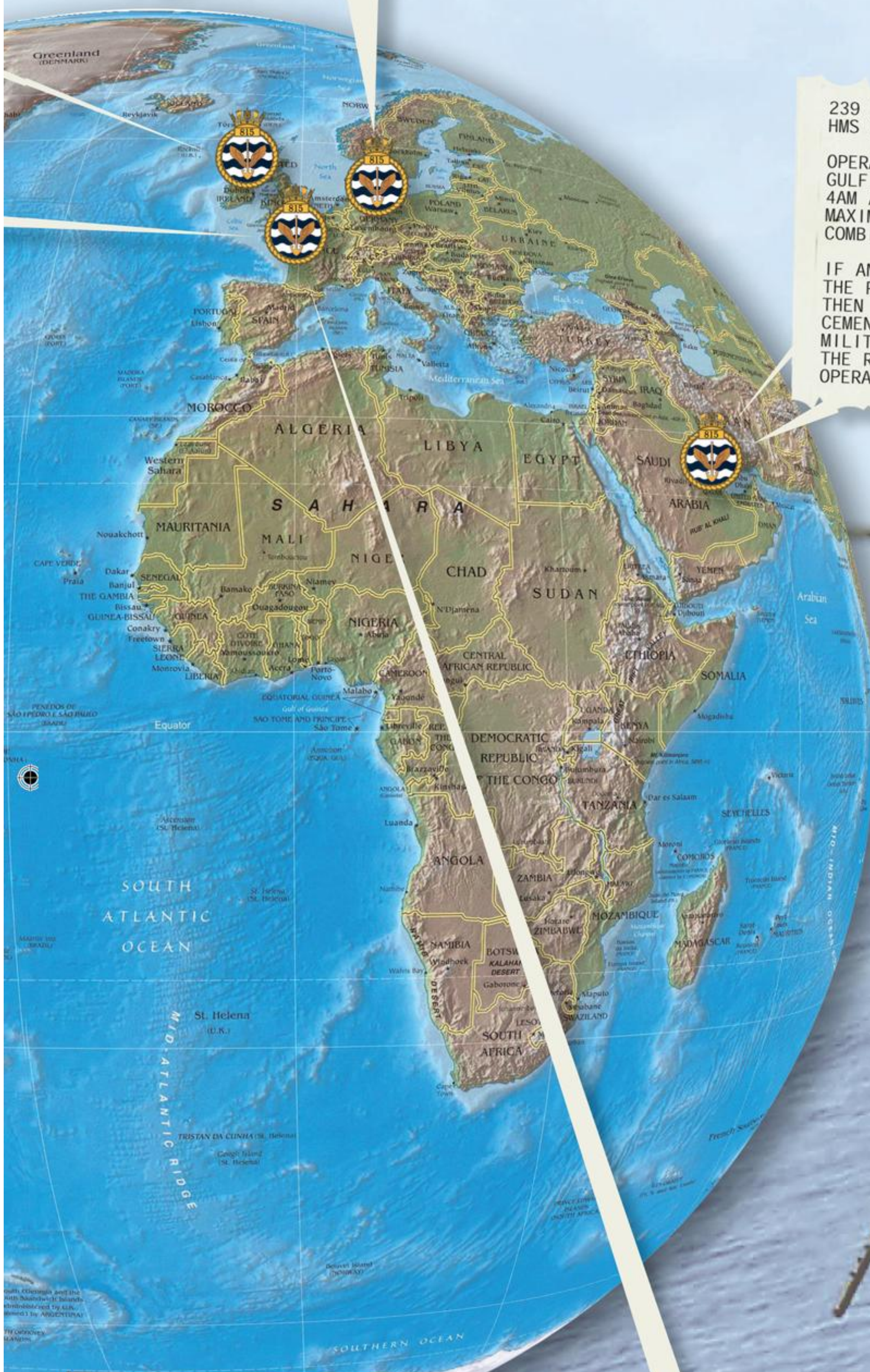
ALTHOUGH MANY SORTIES CAN BE MUNDANE, MAINTAINING FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION IS PARAMOUNT.



**239 FLIGHT
HMS CORNWALL**

OPERATING IN THE SEARING TEMPERATURES OF THE GULF, 239 FLIGHT HAS MAINLY OPERATED BETWEEN 4AM AND 2PM DAILY, HOPING TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF COVERAGE IN SUPPORT OF THE COMBINED TASK FORCE.

IF ANYONE HAD EVER QUESTIONED THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL NAVY AND FLEET AIR ARM IN IRAQ, THEN THE CAPTURE OF THE 15 RN PERSONNEL CEMENTED INTERNATIONAL FOCUS UPON US AS A MILITARY FORCE AND HIGHLIGHTED HOW IMPORTANT THE ROLE OF THE LYNX IS IN MARITIME OPERATIONS.



**217 FLIGHT
HMS CHATHAM**

IN THE PAST YEAR, CHATHAM'S FLIGHT HAS BEEN EMBARKED IN THE FRIGATE FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS, VISITING FIVE CONTINENTS IN THE PROCESS.

THE FLIGHT RE-JOINED THE SHIP IN FEBRUARY AFTER A FOUR-MONTH BREAK TO PREPARE FOR THE SHIP'S IMPENDING MEDITERRANEAN AND FAR EAST DEPLOYMENT.



Worldwide Lynx

● Lynx at Sunset, Part I... A Mk8 Lynx of 815 NAS approaches Yeovilton under golden skies

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Yeovilton

Continued from page 28

Bulwark has no hangar and you cannot expose helicopters to a battering from the elements for more than a quarter of a year.

The 815 NAS team's solution was to procure a blow-up hangar (think a sort of inverted bouncy castle), de-flated when the helicopters were flying, inflated when they were at rest or needed maintenance.

"I think it shows our flexible attitude perfectly," said Lt Cdr Mark Parry, 815's Air Engineer Officer.

"It took a lot of work, but it's something we're very proud of."

Supporting Bulwark was a glimpse into the future as 815 potentially turns increasingly green.

The wide expanses of the ocean have typically been the squadron's domain, but with the increasing shift of the Senior Service to amphibious operations over the past decade, 815 is finding itself operating closer and closer to shore (rather like their cousins in 847 NAS).

Which is exciting, exhilarating in fact – new experiences are always good. But the Mk3s and Mk8s are not as well armoured as their military cousins, so they are not ideally suited to combat operations over land.

"The best thing about the new missions is the variety – we're always looking for variation when it comes to flying, and it's enjoyable as well," says Lt Cdr Brayson.

Another glimpse into the future is maritime counter-terrorism work, a mission largely unseen – and largely unsung.

815 Lynx are at reduced notice to move to respond to suspicious activities in UK waters.

The Lynx serves as the 'eye in the sky' of the formation, thanks to its surveillance radar, with RN Sea Kings and RAF Chinooks providing the punch.

"It will become a significant part of the squadron's role in the future," says Cdr Jones. "It's mentally challenging so it's a task for our most experienced crews."

815 flies two distinct variants of the Lynx: Mk3 and Mk8.

The former is the more basic version, usually for deploying troops or for working with Endurance. The Mk8 is the souped-up version, instantly recognisable by the wizardry on its nose, including infra-red kit.

And within these two distinct Lynx models, there are nine different versions with different kit: some are equipped with night vision goggles, some with a defensive aid suite, some with new Saturn comms equipment. Marrying aircrew to helicopter can be a bit of a challenge...

But it's a challenge the squadron always rises to.

"I'm constantly impressed by the calibre and quality of my people," Cdr Jones stresses.

"They're what make this squadron work."

"They have a lot of affection for the Lynx."

'A sensitive little fella'

NAVY News + Lynx normally = trouble.

The last time I flew in one (shamefully, it's over five years ago) it was with HMS Lancaster in the Gulf in the height of summer. Two hours in the dead man's seat in the back of the cab while the pilots threw the aircraft around... and while my bottle of water sat forlornly in the wardroom.

A colleague was rather ill after going looking for penguins in the Falklands (*She'll thank you for reminding her – Ed*) and a predecessor made an emergency landing in Belize when an engine failed.

Still, nothing ventured...

Our pilots for today are Lt Cdr 'Bins' Brayson and Lt 'Oz' Nelson, taking us on a leisurely flight from Yeovilton to its nearby satellite airfield at Merryfield to show what Lynx can do, from auto rotations (landing safely when the engines fail – a surprisingly gentle manoeuvre) to dropping marines into a 'hot' (ie under fire) landing site and skedaddling.

The Army variant can do a loop-the-loop, should you so wish; the 815 models cannot, which is fine by me.

That, however, does not mean that the Mk3 and Mk8 are not agile creatures. Far from it.

"I'd rather fly in a Lynx than anything else," says Lt Cdr Brayson. "It's an absolute pleasure."

"Lynx is a very sensitive little fella. It's got the pitch and roll characteristics of a fast jet."

To prove it, we do a wing over – a rapid turn to change direction.

I have no idea how it appears from the

outside, but sitting in the back of the Lynx I can see the ground at 90° to me – the aircraft is effectively on its side, something my stomach realises several seconds later and isn't entirely au fait with...

Yet most manoeuvres in Lynx are not violent. They do not need to be. Lynx is a sensitive aircraft which

their hangars, but they are silver, not soiled an oily brown-black à la Sea King.

"We take great pride in the cleanliness of our hangars," says Lt Cdr Parry. "Think of the hangar as an operating theatre. You don't want dirt around you."

You don't. Foreign Object Damage, or FOD, is potentially fatal to any aircraft. The FOD plod carry out regular sweeps of hangar and standings to ensure nothing strikes the Lynxes.

Which is where a Navy News reporter who shall remain nameless enters the fray...

After a flight with 815 he nonchalantly observes that he seems to have mislaid his pen (*Muppet – Ed*).

A FOD alert ensues, the Lynx – now off on another training mission – is almost recalled, and the reporter's face turns a subtle shade of crimson... until the FOD plod save his blushes and find the offending writing implement on the Yeovilton standings. (*You're still a muppet – Ed*.)

Those standings will continue to be home to Lynx into the mid-21st Century.

The helicopter is a child of the '70s. It is getting on – the airframes have a life expectancy of 8,000 hours and some have crossed the 7,000-hour barrier.

Future Lynx is on its way; it flies for the first time in 2009, although it won't reach front-line service with the Fleet Air Arm until around 2015.

"Future Lynx promises to be a great step forward and something we're all looking forward to," said Cdr Jones.

"Lynx has been around for a long time and there's more to come from her."



responds

better to the gentle touch... a bit like its ginger passenger.

Back on the ground, numerous Lynxes are lined up in two of 815's hangars while mechanics and technicians carry out checks.

"Mechanically, a helicopter is a helicopter," says Lt Cdr Parry, who's enjoying his Lynx inauguration having worked with Merlins and Sea Kings hitherto. "The difference lies in the kit on board, the missions systems."

In his experience, Lynx is easier to maintain than Merlin, and most definitely cleaner to care for than Sea King.

There are drip pans beneath the helos in

● Lynx at Sunset, Part II... A Mk8 Lynx on the flight deck of HMS Exeter

Picture: CPO(Phot) Colin Burden, DPR(Navy)



Proposed HQ move to Portsmouth supported

DELEGATES decided that the Association should investigate a move away from London – and that Portsmouth appeared to be the best option.

Despite impassioned pleas on behalf of Chatham, the four-part motion proposed by S/M Alan Fielder-Smith of Norton Fitzwarren branch, and seconded by S/M Tony Milliner of Exeter branch, was carried with little opposition.

Before the debate began, Deputy President S/M Adrian Nance updated delegates on the progress of the Relocation Working Group to date – and assured them that no decisions had yet been made, despite rumours that Portsmouth was a done deal.

S/M Nance said that the current HQ building in Chelsea Manor Street was a 'wasting asset' – the lease runs until 2042, but when other factors such as relative inaccessibility, London prices and congestion charging, and distance from Naval headquarters were taken into account, there was a valid argument for selling the lease and following the MOD's lead by 'rusticating'.

S/M Nick Withington (Isle of Sheppey) said Portsmouth was "not a good location", and that Chatham offered the better option.

The delegate also asked whether the "overloading" of National Council with members from No 3 Area had any influence on the decision.

S/M Nance countered by demonstrating the geographical spread of the National Council members on the Working Group, who could outvote the Area 3 members.

S/M Mike Rockett (Loughton) also demurred on the grounds of location and cost of travel, although S/M Margaret Tedrick (Long Beach) said the trip from California to Portsmouth via Gatwick was relatively simple.

The motion proposed that:

- The decision of the National Council to investigate the relocation of HQ to a more suitable area be endorsed;

- Any relocation of HQ be carried out on a cost neutral basis;

- Portsmouth is the most suitable location for HQ;

- The National Council proceed with the relocation for HQ to the most suitable location as soon as practicable.

The motion was carried in full with little opposition.

Association explores formal link with RN

Area 3 is top of the recruiters

THE Sword of Honour for the area which recruited the most new full members was this year retained by No 3 Area.

Gosport branch won the Brigg's Dirk for branches over 30 members who were most successful at recruiting, while the small branch award – the Brigg's Rose Bowl – went to Gosport's near neighbours the Isle of Wight.

The equivalent awards for overseas branches went to Port Phillip Bay in Australia (branches over 30 members) while the small branch award went to Moraira and District, in Spain.

Commissioning certificates were handed to East Cyprus and Knowle, while Golden Jubilee certificates went to Bridgwater, Chichester (this one apparently ten years late), Dereham and Mexborough and District.

THE ASSOCIATION has made the first move towards offering free membership to all serving Royal Navy personnel in a bid to bring in fresh blood.

Following overwhelming support from Conference, the National Council will now seek to instigate a formal link between the serving and ex-Navy through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Proposing the initiative as a motion of urgency, RNA Chairman S/M David White told delegates that such a move would bring to the Royal Navy "an awareness of the RNA, what it stands for, the good work it does each year in the field of welfare, as well as learning of and even experiencing some of the many successful area and branch social activities around the UK and abroad."

He urged the 156 delegates to put aside financial considerations: "This exercise has to be seen as investing for the future of the association, and at no cost to us," he said.

"We should look further ahead,

shipmates, with the intention of convincing the serving Royal Navy to believe 'Once Navy, Always Navy'."

He added that approval to negotiate an MOU could be "a lifesaver for the RNA".

S/M White felt the move, which sought to formalise the ad hoc hospitality shown by branches and areas to the serving Navy, could also make the RNA "a very significant naval pressure group".

The motion was seconded by S/M Len Manners (Beccles).

S/M Bill Sunderland (York and District) queried how long free membership would last, and was assured that it would only be as long as a person was serving.

S/M Phil Brown said the Littlehampton branch rejected the motion – many of his colleagues were pensioners and expected serving sailors to pay their own way, although he added that the branch was in favour of closer liaison with the Navy in principle.

S/M John Stewart (Saltash) wanted to know what status – and voting rights – this new class of member might have.

S/M Arthur Gutteridge (Plymouth) welcomed the

initiative, saying that new members would bring "an additional dimension" to the Association.

S/M Paul Fitzgerald (Dartmouth) suggested an additional line of enquiry – the Association should approach 'splinter groups' such as ship associations to encourage them to join the RNA as well.

He believed such groups could easily exist within the Association – a suggestion which President S/M John McAnally said he would personally take up.

Supporting the motion, S/M Gamlin (Chelmsford) warned

delegates that some branches "must be more welcoming to younger members."

He said he had asked if the son of an acquaintance, a Royal Marine, would like to visit the branch – to be told 'he doesn't want to be associated with a load of old fageys who would tell him that it was better in their time than it is in his.'

S/M Gamlin said that serving personnel have different attitudes and different requirements.

The motion was carried with just a handful of opponents.

Issues 'need to be faced'

THERE was a sense of familiarity as RNA President S/M John McAnally opened the conference.

Thanking Torbay branch and No 4 Area for their efforts, the President reminded delegates that he had been the last captain of HMS Torquay – and warned that he could fill the entire day with dits about those days.

But there was plenty of business on the agenda, and after the Chairman of Torbay Council, Cllr Beryl McPhail, had officially opened the conference – noting the historic links between the English Riviera and the Royal Navy – Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson spoke of some uncomfortable times for the Navy.

Admiral Ibbotson, Flag Officer Sea Training, said: "The Royal Navy has had a difficult period recently."

Referring to the abduction of the 15 members

of HMS Cornwall's boarding party in the Gulf in March, the Admiral said that people in positions of authority needed to face issues head-on, accept that the Navy "had got some things wrong", and "make every effort to learn from this and jolly well get it right in future."

But he declared that restoring public confidence was not a task for the serving Navy alone: "I see the RNA, with its strength at home and overseas, and with its various international linkages, as a valuable part of the Royal Naval community, and I believe we should progress forward together."

He added that backing the motion of urgency on closer links with the RN (see lead story, above) could bring other benefits, such as an RNA Liaison Officer for every ship, unit and establishment, easier ship adoptions and access to ship's programmes.

Some you win, some you lose...

A proposal by the Isle of Sheppey branch to withdraw from membership of the International Maritime Confederation, seconded by Chelmsford, was defeated after delegates were told by the National Chairman that the prestige of being a member had to be worth the cost – less than the annual cleaning bill at HQ.

Woking, backed by Dorking, succeeded in their proposal that a cap of £100 be placed on the fee for life membership, and Motion 4, that Londonderry branch host the 2009 National Conference, won unanimous support.

Despite a flurry of amendments and amended amendments (all defeated), overseas branches won the right for National Council to appoint one of its members solely to represent them – giving them the same level of support as UK areas.

The motion was proposed by Southern Ontario and seconded by Perth in Australia.

Liskeard, seconded by

Portland, were successful in suggesting the RNA approach the Government to gain permission to wear the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal along with other medals.

A motion by Cork and County, seconded by East Antrim, that RNA branches must diversify their activities, was comfortably defeated, and Chatham's Motion 8, that the RNA hold a biennial national seminar on welfare, was withdrawn as National Council has already agreed to the idea.

Motion 9, from Chatham, backed by the Isle of Sheppey, that the National Council produces a comprehensive summary of meetings to Area secretaries within 21 days was defeated – it was pointed out that National Council members and delegates should be providing such detailed reports to their areas for dissemination as a matter of course.

And the final motion, in which Bletchley (seconded by Peterborough) praised the work of the National Council was carried.

President advocates 'survival strategy'

THE ASSOCIATION is in difficulties, and action needs to be taken, RNA President S/M John McAnally warned delegates.

"Shipmates, we are in trouble. Membership is in significant decline," said the President.

"Our numbers are reducing from our current 28,000 by about 1,700 a year."

He added: "You don't have to be a mathematician like Einstein or have the intellectual qualities of an archbishop to calculate that in ten years, given the current rate of decline, our Association will cease to be viable."

"Shipmates, we have to embark on a survival strategy," he continued, adding that the delegates had to give "detailed consideration as to how we can avoid disaster – because that is how I, and a great number of RNA and Royal Navy people, perceive the future, should we fail to take a proactive stance and save this wonderful Association."

S/M McAnally said the fact that most other similar membership organisations were suffering should not bring any comfort.

He urged delegates to vote for the strategy that would "keep the RNA ship afloat for years to come."

While admitting that some proposals would prove "unpalatable" for some members, he pointed out

that "the demise of the Association ought to be unpalatable to everybody."

He added that "a desperate position necessitates desperate remedies."

"We do not want to change the world – only save it as best we can," he concluded.

RNA Treasurer S/M Barraclough told delegates that the annual accounts showed the Association's expenditure had exceeded income by around £40,000 – less than was forecast because of higher than expected investment income and lower costs for building maintenance.

Stock market improvements, however, meant the Association's net resources increased by £55,000.

And while the main source of income remains subscriptions (up £10,000 to £235,000 in 2006), the Treasurer observed that investments and legacies now make "a significant contribution" to the RNA's finances.

Charities and Welfare Officer S/M Rita Lock told Conference that the Association had paid out more than £90,000 in 2006.

S/M Lock thanked all the associations which had helped the RNA, and also Association members for giving "so much of your time and money into helping those not as fortunate as we are."



The Royal Naval Association

Once Navy Always Navy

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship

Who can join?

- Full Members
- Serving and Ex-Service members of RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves RFA and RNXS
- Associate members
- Others in sympathy with our objects especially families

What does the Association do?

We:

- Support the Royal Navy
- Maintain Naval traditions
- Enjoy social activities
- Re-unite shipmates
- Remember the fallen
- Help the disabled
- Look after the needy
- Cheer up the distressed
- Stand together in unity

How to join

Write to RNA HQ
82 Chelsea Manor Street
London SW3 5QJ
Tel: 020 7352 6764
Fax: 020 7352 7385
www.royal-naval-association.co.uk





'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'



● S/M Jim Leggett

Standard shown in Australia

AREA 5 standard bearer S/M Jim Leggett took part in the Anzac Day parade in Adelaide, the state capital of South Australia.

S/M Leggett, accompanied by two cadets from TS Adelaide, paraded the Area 5 standard and laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.

This is believed to be the first time an area standard has taken part in an Anzac Day parade in Australia.

S/M Leggett thanked everyone at Adelaide branch for their hospitality and friendship.

Ugly, but enjoyable

MEMBERS of the Bishops Stortford branch held a celebratory lunch at Ugly village hall to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the branch.

Joining branch members were residents and staff of Pembroke House, representatives of Harlow Sea Cadet unit and executives of the RN Benevolent Trust.

Toasts to the Queen and the branch, and the reply, were followed by the cutting of the anniversary cake.

Dinners at Dartmouth

A FORMAL dinner was held at Dartmouth to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1957 Entry of cadets to BRNC.

Twenty surviving members and their partners attended, and the Guest of Honour was Admiral Sir James Eberle.

There was also an informal dinner at the Royal Castle Hotel and a buffet lunch at the Yacht Club, though bad weather cancelled a planned boat trip.

Ganges calling

BOB Winslow hopes to set up a Swindon branch of the HMS Ganges Association.

Anyone in the town who trained or worked at the East Coast establishment is asked to contact Bob on offcom1@yahoo.co.uk or write to him at 77 Gipsy Lane, Swindon SN2 8DH.

Bob also reminds serving or ex-Navy personnel that there is an RNA branch which meets at Harding Street in Swindon; for more details call 01793 522153.

Father Bill mourned

FORMER Bridport branch chaplain Father William Hill died peacefully in his sleep on June 5.

Father Bill perhaps owed his allegiance more to the RAF than the RN because of his background.

But when Bridport's previous padre, Father Roger, left the Dorset town, Father Bill was said to be surprised and thrilled to have been approached to take up the position.

Despite his roots in the junior branch of the Armed Forces, Father Bill did have a major link with the Senior Service, having had a passion for anything to

do with Nelson and Trafalgar, with a published book on the subject to his name.

Father Bill became a very active member of the branch, and his sincere and quiet support, as well as his selflessness and understanding, made him an invaluable friend.

S/M Brian Cox, Bridport's Welfare Officer, said: "Bill was a wonderful man, and someone that even cynical old sailors could love and respect."

"We will all gladly raise a glass of Nelson's blood to the memory of such a very worthy shipmate."

Neptune Association pays visit to Malta

MORE than 60 members of the Neptune Association visited Malta and Tripoli to honour the memory of the 837 men who died in HM ships Neptune and Kandahar in 1941.

The pilgrimage followed the erection of a Neptune and Kandahar Memorial at the

National Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire in 2005.

Association members asked for the visit as a final ceremony in memory of the two ships, as they had the opportunity to travel to Malta, from where the ships sailed on their last voyage, and to visit the site of their mining off Libya.

Of HMS Neptune's ship's company – more than 600 men – only one sailor survived. Besides

the loss of the two ships, Aurora and Penelope were also damaged.

The first couple of days were spent getting to know the George Cross island and visiting historical sites, including a harbour cruise.

Then it was off to Tripoli and the Commonwealth War Graves World War 2 cemetery, where six named Neptune graves are located – and there may have been others among the 16 unnamed graves.

The memorial service was followed by a lively reception at the British Embassy arranged by the British Ambassador, Sir Vincent Fean.

The main event the following day was the sea trip on board a nearly-new 2,500-tonne Italian-built dredger the Jarif.

The Libyan skipper, Capt Rageb el Geszairy, turned out to be an ex-Foxrot submarine captain, and enjoyed a yarn or two with the visiting party's ex-Opossum CO.

The captain, crew and shoreside controllers could not have been more helpful as they headed 17 miles out of Tripoli harbour to the memorial site.

There the dredger stopped and a service of remembrance was held, during which a weighted White Ensign was lowered over the side, followed by a New Zealand Ensign, in honour of the 150 Kiwis lost.

The ship then slowly got under way as wreaths and more than 200 individual named floral tributes were cast into the sea as the names of the lost were recited.

It was an emotional experience for relatives in the party – and for Association member Frank Brown, who had been an AB in HMS

D-Day service

MEMBERS of Bolton branch attended a service of remembrance on the 63rd anniversary of D-Day at the Cenotaph in the Town Hall square.



Naval Quirks

BRITISH MINES AT THE START OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR WERE POOR AND NOT VERY EFFECTIVE...



...TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT MANY GERMAN WARSHIPS MOUNTED ONE ON A STAND AS A SOUVENIR!



OUR RUSSIAN ALLY'S MINES, HOWEVER, WERE SURPRISINGLY MUCH MORE EFFICIENT



...IN A SINGLE NIGHT IN NOVEMBER 1916, A RUSSIAN MINEFIELD IN THE BALTIC CLAIMED NO FEWER THAN SEVEN GERMAN DESTROYERS!



Greetings from South Africa

BUSINESS was dealt with in rapid order by members of the Plymouth branch in order to allow 50 members at the April monthly meeting to welcome an overseas visitor.

The branch welcomed S/M Ronnie Gilbert, Deputy Chairman of the Capetown branch, who called in on the way to a family reunion in Scotland and Ireland.

S/M Ronnie, originally from Glasgow, served in HMS Victorious and HMS Protector before transferring to the South African Submarine Service.

After conveying best wishes from the Cape, S/M Ronnie presented a plaque from his branch.

Busy month for Woking

APRIL was a busy month for Woking branch.

At the monthly branch meeting Woking was presented with an impressive engraved stand to hold four standards by the Merchant Navy Association Training School/College at Gravesend – an honour the branch was pleased to receive, and which was in time to be used in two parades during the month.

The first was organised by the branch to celebrate St George's Day, at St Peter's Church.

A total of 25 standards were paraded, with diverse veterans associations also in attendance.

The Mayor of Woking, Cllr John Kingsbury, and local MP Humphrey Malins attended.

The branch was asked by the Royal British Legion to arrange a parade to celebrate their 85th birthday at a service at St Mary of Bethany church, Woking, which was attended by 26 standards.

Even then the pace of things did not slacken, with attention turning to the Veterans Day and Falklands 25th Anniversary march through the town, which was due to take place as *Navy News* went to press.



● S/Ms William Kempson (left), Freddie Westwood and Tom Stallard (right) of the Folkestone branch present a cheque for £1,000 to Capt Mark Rose of the Salvation Army (white shirt). The money was raised to help the Salvation Army following the earthquake in Folkestone when they gave help to the local community.

Picture: Kent Messenger

Havock, part of Force K, and who had seen the whole episode unfold 66 years before.

The party enjoyed a warm welcome everywhere they went in Libya, including a Tripoli restaurant where they watched a display of local dancing.

The final act was to return to Malta for a dedication of a plaque to Force K, particularly Neptune and Kandahar, in the Malta Maritime Museum, formerly the Old Naval Bakery, adjacent to St Angelo Fort in Dockyard Creek.

The plaque was unveiled by the President of Malta, and the museum accepted a scroll of honour bearing the names of all those lost.

After a final reception, attended by sailors from HMS Echo and Maltese Sea Cadets, the visitors returned home, describing it as "a truly great experience."



● MTB 102 rises on the tide before the ceremony to decommission HMS Hornet, as reported last month. MTB 102 was the first vessel to take up residence there when Hornet – headquarters of the Coastal Forces at that time – was reactivated in 1940



● S/M Fred Cooper (left), of the Cyprus West branch, presented a cheque for £100 to the 57th Sea Scout Group, Episkopi. S/M Fred is pictured with Brian Nicolle (front left), Paul Graham, James Lloyd, Jake Collins and Sue Lloyd. The funds will go towards the upkeep of the group and for training aids. The Sea Scout group boasts 40 members and is based at Happy Valley in the Episkopi Garrison.

Picture: Fez Parker (www.fezphot.com)

Essex members bid Vic farewell

AN ACTIVE member of the Rayleigh branch has died of complications following an operation three years ago.

S/M Vic Crick, who died on May 18, first tasted Service life with a stint in the Territorial Army at the age of 18, but by 20 he had seen the error of his ways and decided that the Senior Service was the life for him.

During his career he rose to Chief Petty Officer and served in ten ships, but his favourite was HMS Diomedé, whose badge he chose to wear on his blazer.

Upon retiring he ran the Guildhall at Abingdon until he moved to Rayleigh in 1998.

S/M Vic was a valued member of the Association for nine years, at various times taking on the tasks of treasurer and deputy standard bearer for Rayleigh branch.

During this time he was also active in the Royal British Legion, and became branch chairman.

John Dixon, president of the RBL branch, said: "We were in the doldrums and Vic came along."

"He was our leader and, along with his wife Joan, he turned us around."

"Our Poppy Appeal went up 100 per cent - he was brilliant."

"If I had a brother I would want it to be Vic - he was a great friend."

Seven standards were paraded at the service in Holy Trinity Church, and the committal at Southend Crematorium.

Rayleigh's big day goes with a swing

MORE than 150 golfers gathered at the South Essex Golf and Country Club for the annual Rayleigh branch charity tournament.

The heavy rain which was forecast for the day held off until the latter part of the day, which meant a good turnout of 165 players in support of SSAFA Forces Help.

Players representing the Royal Navy, Army, US Navy and Air Force, NATO, the Metropolitan Police, Southend Police, British Waterways, the Coastguard - and, of course, the RNA - competed for a range of prizes and trophies.

This year also saw some ex-National Servicemen and civilians invited to play, and it is hoped those numbers will increase.

The golf was followed by lunch, a raffle and auction, and the grand finale was a Sunset Ceremony performed by the Royal Marine Cadets and Sea Cadets from the Chelmsford unit TS Upholder, who were in turn inspected by RNA president Vice Admiral McAnally, the tournament guest of honour.

The colour party included Steve Maylor RAF, Greg Simkin RN, Danny Greer Essex Yeomanry and Kevin Logan, US Navy.

Admiral McAnally also presented prizes and gave a speech



● Players and spectators at the Rayleigh branch charity golf tournament line up at the South Essex Golf and Country Club

along with chairman of SSAFA Essex Branch, John Burrow.

As this marks the retirement of Alan Booth of RNA Rayleigh from the organisational side of the event - ten years is enough for any man - the new committee thanked Alan and his team for their hard work.

The amount raised for SSAFA Forces Help was around £4,500, and the charity also recorded its thanks for Rayleigh's efforts.

Competition results: Singles Stableford, Mark Banks (British Waterways); RNA Trophy (sponsored by Navy News), 1:

Gary Faulkner (Tunbridge Wells), 2: Alan Booth (Rayleigh); Inter Services Trophy, 1: LATC (RAF); 2: Mix & Match (Army); Matelot Trophy, 1: John Nicholls (ex-Royal Navy); 2: Cdr Don Chalmers (NATO); Police Event, Old Bill 2; Ladies Event, 1: Sally Davies; 2: Janet King; Team Event, 1: Artful Dodgers; 2: Rayleigh RNA.

Presenter dies of pneumonia

TV PRESENTER Tony Bastable has died of pneumonia.

The broadcaster made his name as a presenter of the children's ITV show *Magpie*, seen as the commercial stations' answer to the BBC's *Blue Peter* in the 1960s.

After a varied career in television Tony embarked on projects

in independent production - one of which was the Royal Navy's *Viewpoint RN* magazine programme, which he anchored for more than ten years.

He was also the brains behind the Institute of Cricket Umpires and Scorers, which aimed to raise the level of skill in this area.

Historic signal will be sent once more

A CENTURY of RN Wireless Telegraphists will be celebrated later this year at reunion in Bournemouth organised by the HMS Ganges Association.

Many thousands of Boy and Junior Telegraphists, later to be known as ROs, were trained at HMS Ganges at Shotley, near Harwich, from 1907 until the establishment closed in 1976.

Young 16-year-old trained telegraphists then went to sea, or on to more advanced training at HMS Mercury, at Leydene in Hampshire - the RN's School of Communications.

This role has since been taken up by HMS Collingwood at Fareham.

The reunion is to be held at

Mainbrace spliced in memory of Sid

CRAWLEY branch bid farewell to their late long-term president S/M Sid French by prayers and splicing the mainbrace in his honour.

Before the meeting started the president and chairman of the RBL turned up to present 30 year poppy collectors medals to S/Ms Davis and Woodhouse.

The committee then asked S/M John Dooley if he would accept the office of president - and John accepted.

Sailor Sunday

MEMBERS and friends of the Market Harborough branch celebrated their annual Sailor Sunday service at St Nicholas Church, Little Bowden.

During the service flowers were laid at the memorial in the churchyard by S/M Eric Cousins, the Still was piped by S/M Michael Petch and the standard was paraded by S/M Fred Brown.

Afterwards a reception was held at the Cherry Tree Inn, Little Bowden, when a presentation was made to the Market Harborough chaplain, the Rev Elizabeth Sewell - her last service with the RNA before her departure to Yorkshire.

Wartime sailor is honoured

BALDOCK branch of the Royal British Legion will oversee a memorial parade and service on Sunday July 1 in memory of a sailor who died in World War 2.

At the request of his parents, the name of AB Rex Ingray was omitted from the Baldock War Memorial at the close of the war.

But now, with the passage of time, surviving relatives have requested that Rex's name be included in the Roll of Honour.

Any shipmates of Rex and veterans or survivors of the sinking of HMS Laforey are most welcome to attend the event, which is at 3pm.

Destroyer HMS Laforey was commissioned in August 1941 and shortly after was involved in Malta convoys.

She had a fine war record - she was at the landings at Diego Suarez in Madagascar, Sicily and Salerno, and bombarded defences at Tunisia, Pantellaria and Lampedusa, and the Italian coast.

She was sunk by a torpedo fired by the dying U223 60 miles off Palermo on March 30 1944 with the loss of 189 men.

Newhaven calls in on cadets

MEMBERS of the Newhaven branch of the Royal British Legion have visited the Newhaven and Seaford Sea Cadets headquarters.

The unit has recently become affiliated to the branch and shipmates were able to watch the cadets training.

Branch president Keith Baker presented the officers and cadets who helped with the Poppy Appeal with RBL certificates.



● Members of the Yorkshire FAA Association on board HMS York

Flying visit to the South

THE Yorkshire Fleet Air Arm Association enjoyed a good trip to Portsmouth, where they stayed at the Royal Maritime Club.

More than 40 members enjoyed a visit to 815 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton, in honour of past president Lt Cdr John Wellham, the last surviving Swordfish pilot to take part in the attack on Taranto, who died last year.

Visits Officer Julie Halford helped to make the day a great success, arranging a visit to the Historic Flight and the FAA Museum.

The party was also invited aboard HMS York, and even with the amount of work taking place on board, the shipmates were made very welcome, and 16 were taken on a tour by Lt Tom Rowley.

Albert Firth, secretary of the York FAA Association, said they were most grateful to *Awards For All* for making the trip possible.

Seven of the Yorkshire FAA Association's members were invited to join other affiliates on board HMS Ark Royal when she sailed from Portsmouth to London as *Navy News* went to press.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our May edition (right) was HMS Sleuth, and it was HMS Zephyr which was involved in the collision.

The £50 prize goes to B. Willing of Gillingham in Kent.

This month's ship (above) was built at Woolston in the mid-1960s to support mine counter-measures forces.

Can you name her, and also give her pennant number?

The correct answers could win you £50.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is August 16. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our September edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 149

Name

Address

My answers

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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

Navy News looks back through its pages to recall some of the July headlines of past decades...



● Frigate HMS Lynx, an unusual entry on a birth certificate...

40 years ago

A Royal Navy frigate welcomed a new addition into the world when Mrs Betty Biggs of South Georgia Island gave birth on board HMS Lynx.

Mrs Biggs was on board a liner when it became clear that she was going into labour two months early.

She was transferred to Lynx to rush her over to Port Stanley in the Falklands, and the baby was born on board shortly after the ship's arrival.

Shipwright Douglas Lesanto built a special weather-proof cradle to take the unique cargo ashore.

30 years ago

One hundred and seventy ships, some 30,000 men, the pride of the British, Commonwealth and other foreign navies gathered to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

The ships gathered in ranks at Spithead as the Queen sailed past in the royal yacht HMV Britannia, and the sailors cried "Hip hip hooray".

The Queen was obviously pleased with the celebration as she asked the Admiralty Board to send out that ever-popular message "Splice the Mainbrace".

20 years ago

Surg Cdr – or 'Doc' – Rick Jolly was winched to the rescue once more when a crewman was injured on the French trawler Menkar.

The Naval doctor was being lowered to the deck of the trawler from the Search and Rescue Wessex helicopter when he became entangled in the radio aerials and mast.

In a stroke of luck, a clip on the officer's belt got caught on a wire running from mast to bridge and Doc Jolly was able to slide to safety.

The patient was treated then flown to Truro City Hospital.

Reunions

JULY 2007

HMS Fearless: HMS Fearless reunion on July 27 to be held in the Senior Rates mess HMS Excellent. For details contact CMEM Walker, e-mail: mws-nbcd-c2-2@nrt.mod.uk or tel: 023 9254 7046.

AUGUST 2007

HMS Heron: Fisher Mess, SAM training course from May 1949 to Jan 1950. An opportunity to meet old mates from Fisher mess. Meet at the Podimore public house, near Yeovilton, at 1130hrs August 13 for lunch, followed by a conducted tour of Yeovilton Air Station. Contact Derek Venables on 01548 580848.

Russian Convoy Cub, North West Branch: Calling all White Berets. Terry Gilligan is organising a reunion from August 31 to September 2 at the Savoy Hotel, Blackpool. For further details contact Terry on 01744 601591.

HMS Zulu: Second reunion to commemorate our Windies Jolly over 30 years ago to be held at the Gladys Inn in Rosyth from August 31 to September 1. Overnight accommodation is available. Further details from Iain Hamill at i.hamill@jmu.ac.uk or write to 77 Sutherland Drive, Eastham, Wirral CH62 8DY or tel: 0151 328 1035 or mob: 07957 619932.

SEPTEMBER 2007

849 NAS: This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Sea King helicopter operating in the Airborne Early Warning role. It is also the 55th anniversary of 849 becoming an Airborne Early Warning Squadron. To commemorate this milestone, 849 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose, is proud to announce a reunion to all serving and ex-serving aircrew and air engineering officers of 849 Squadron from the past 55 years. The event will take place from September 7 to 9 at RNAS Culdrose, culminating in a black tie dinner in the Officers' Mess. Any aircrew or air-engineering officers who served in 849 NAS over the last 55 years, whether with the 'Bag', the Gannet or the Skyraider should contact Lt James W G Stone at 849obs4@culdrose.mod.uk, tel: 01326 557525 or write to 849 Squadron, RNAS Culdrose, Helston, Cornwall, TR12 7RH.

HMS Diana Association: will be holding their reunion/AGM at the Edgbaston Hotel, Birmingham from September 7 to 9. On the Saturday morning at the Nautical Club for the AGM, and an evening's entertainment. All commissions are welcome to come along, meet up with old oppos and have a great time. Anyone interested please contact the Secretary J Fisher tel: 01530 242850 or e-mail: johnjackie.fisher@virgin.net for an application form and hotel reservation form.

TS Mercury Old Boys' Association: welcomes all old boys, former staff and honorary members to their annual reunion and AGM on September 16 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Further details from Mike Ball at MBall0983@aol.com or tel: 023 9263 7477.

HMS Formidable Association: The final reunion takes place this year at the Thistle Hotel, Castle Donington, September 21-24. Details can be obtained from Roy Collis, 82 St Dunstan's Hill, Cheam, Surrey, SM1 2UD or Ron Tovey, 15 Newlands Avenue, Gosport, Hants, PO12 3QX, tel: 023 9258 0539.

14th Carrier Air Group Association: Reunion at the RNA Club, Leamington Spa on September 22. All who served with 804 and 812 NAS in Glory, Ocean and Theseus or with either squadron at any time are invited to attend. Details from Ken Lambert, 17 Walgrave, Orton Malborne, Peterborough, PE2 5NR or tel: 01733 234655.

HMS Protector Association: Reunion at Eastbourne from September 28 to October 1. The reunion for 2008 will be at the Metropole Hotel, Blackpool on April 11-14. Details from Doug Harris on 01495 718870 or visit <http://www.hmsprotector.org>.

OCTOBER 2007

Regulating Branch Association (RBA93): Reunion in Portsmouth, October 5-6. Further details from Tony Hadley at ton34avt@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9273 8902.

Submariners Association: The annual reunion of the Submariners Association will take place October 12-14 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. For details contact Rick Elrick, 1 Winthorpe Grove, Doddington Park, Lincoln LN6 3PL, (tel: 01522 692372; e-mail: rick.elrick@tesco.net). To join the SA contact Jim McMaster, 1 Blantyre Court, Bargarran, Renfrewshire PA8 6BN, (tel: 0141 571 4094; e-mail: jim.mcmaster2@ntlworld.com). Website can be found online at www.submarinersassociation.co.uk.

HMS Tartar Association: Fourth reunion takes place, October 12-14, at the Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth. Anyone wishing to attend please see the website at <http://www.hmsttartar.co.uk> or contact Mal (friend) at socialsec@hmsttartar.co.uk or tel: 01303 813097.

NOVEMBER 2007

HMS Duchess Association: Reunion November 2-4 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. All commissions welcome. For details contact Adrian 'Sharkey' Ward at adie.ward@ntlworld.com or tel: 01522 872998 or write to 17 Marne Gardens, Lincoln, LN1 3UQ.

DECEMBER 2007

881 Combined Operations Bombardment Battery RA (TA): Reunion at the Stag and Hounds, Windsor on December 4 at 1930. Details from N R Feeley on 01753 868771.

MAY 2008

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: A flourishing organisation which is actively recruiting ex-Cleopatras from the cruiser and frigate to join us. Wives and partners are also very welcome. AGM and reunion is at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, May 9-12. If you are interested contact Warwick Franklin at warwick_franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611 or write to 127 Kit Hill Crescent, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 1EL.

Swap drafts

ET(ME) Cook. Draft: HMS Campbelltown. Will swap for: a Portsmouth draft, preferably a Type 23. Contact: HMS_Campbelltown-MEM20.

LET(ME) Jones. Draft: HMS Endurance. Will swap for: any shore draft, Hunt-class minesweeper and P2000. Contact: 07917 337409 or OTJONES@hotmail.co.uk.

Ask Jack

Blouson Query: Douglas has had in his possession for some 30 years a light coloured blouson, the buttons of which are plastic with gold inserts printed: 'Royal Navy Corps' with a five-pointed star. He has asked various members of the Indomitable Association, but no one seems to know of any Royal Navy Corps. Can anyone help? Contact Douglas Banks, 56 Sheffield Road, Godley, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2PL or tel: 0161 368 6945.

HMS Cleopatra: Seeking the whereabouts of the ship's bell of HMS Cleopatra, the Leander, sold for scrap in 1992. My son was christened using the ship's bell and I want to verify whether the bell has his name engraved inside it. Contact Brian Morrison (ex Chief Shipwright) at brm@blueyonder.co.uk, tel: 01752 519320 or write to 4 Mount Batten Way, Plymstock, Plymouth, Devon, PL9 9EH.

Convoy FS59: I am researching the loss of several vessels in WW2 Convoy FS59 (559 sometimes) which went aground on the Haisborough Sands on August 6 1941 for an exhibition for the Lifeboat Day in August. Official records in the museum's possession only show the work carried out by the lifeboats, but there is a big story to tell of bravery on the Royal Naval side. Seeking anyone who was on this convoy, especially serving on the escorts Vimiera, Bassett and Puffin, I would also like to contact Sub Lt D O'Sullivan who took charge of Vimiera's whaler, rescuing floating crew men. Please help show the full story of this tragic day when many lives were lost, including many of HMT Agate. All information received will be added to our records and be available for members of the public in the future. If you can help contact Frank H Muirhead, at jumbomuirhead@btinternet.com or write to Hon Archivist, Henry Blogg Museum, RNLI Cromer, Norfolk

HMS Cossack: Seeking information regarding Henry Aubrey Bostrom who was in HMS Cossack in 1933. Believed to have served 22 years and ended as a CPO. Any information at all to his son, Alex at e-mail Alexbostrom@aol.com or tel: 01291 424838 or write to 3 Kirlach Close, Caldicot, NP26 4QE.

Admiral Shalto Douglas: Richard Bickford is endeavouring to contact the current descendants of his great aunt, Mrs L O Douglas, wife of Adm Shalto Douglas, died 1882. There were two sons (Cdr G Douglas and Cdr Henry P Douglas of the Hydrographic Dept of the Admiralty) and four daughters. Any help you can give with this quest will be much appreciated. Contact Richard Bickford at biky@ukonline.co.uk, tel: 01423 860140 or write to 22 Abbey Craggs Way, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire, HG5 8EF.

HMS Falkland Sound (ex Yehuin) 1982, (known as 'The Black Pig'): Eric has in his possession the engine-room plate presented to my late brother Lt M R Davies in July 1982 in Port Stanley by his team on secondment from HMS Exeter where he was SCO and Senior Bridge Watchkeeping Officer under the command of Capt Hugh Balfour. Eric would be interested to hear from anyone with knowledge of this little mentioned aspect of the Falklands War. Contact Eric Davies at megend@btinternet.com, tel: 01730 268149 or write to 11 Heatherfield, Buriton, Hampshire, GU31 5RY.

HMS Ganges: Seeking information or memories about John Millington who died in July 1946, aged 21, and is buried at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. He was also in HMS Ganges, Rodney Division, Mess 18, Class 28, HMS Corinthian, HMS Midgie and RN Barracks, Chatham, Mess 19H Anson Block. If anyone has any information could they contact Cyril Skellern, 37 Buxton Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 2DU or tel: 01260 276663.

Jenny's Side Party: Graham was onboard HMS Blackpool in 1965 on the way back to Hong Kong. The ship saved all the scrap wood from the spare parts boxes which was then used as payment or part payment for having the ship painted by 'Jenny's Side Party'. He also thinks she was featured in a TV broadcast in the late 1970s, early 80s. He has been looking for any reference to this painting service but no luck and is starting to think he imagined it. Can anybody throw some light on this? Contact Graham 'Gil' Harding at graum49@hotmail.com, or 49 Kingsale Road, Salcombe, Devon, TQ8 8AW.

HMS Scylla: Ian's grandfather, CPO Herbert John Waddell, served on Scylla during WW2. He would be interested in any personal accounts that someone may remember. His grandfather passed away years ago and didn't like to talk of his service time. So his daughter Vivien doesn't have much information she can tell me. Any information about him or ship photos people would be willing to share would be greatly appreciated. Ian has all his service medals mounted below the only existing photo of him in uniform and is hoping to slowly add to this as he finds out more. Contact Ian King at ian.king@3web.com or write to 148 River Run Terrace, London, Ontario, Canada, N5W 5Z1.

HMS Kent and Suffolk: Seeking information about the men who served with my dad on Kent, 1938-40, and Suffolk, 1941-45. His name was Albert 'Bill' William John Hollands and came from Gillingham, Kent. Contact Jim Hollands at jrhollands@btinternet.com or tel: 01634 670202.

HMS Maidstone: Following the loss of his grandmother some of her private papers have been found and Darren is trying to find out about a man named Roy (surname unknown) who was about 35 in 1965 and was serving on HMS Maidstone when she was paid off in 1968. Darren knows that he was

friends with a Peter Baxter and an Alan (surname unknown), also believed to be RN. He wrote that when Maidstone paid off, he would return to Deal. Darren also found a letter from the wife of Roy, which talks about the sad loss of Roy, which may be around the 1970s-80s. There are some gaps in my grandmother's life which I know my father and aunt are keen to fill. If you can help contact Darren Steed by e-mail at darren2thelodge@hotmail.com or tel: 07872 056044.

HMS Raleigh 1960: Garth is seeking to find a photo of his class at HMS Raleigh who joined up on Dec 5 1960. He cannot remember class number although the last two digits were probably 50. He is willing to pay any reasonable charges (ie printing and postage that may be required). He would also be happy to hear from any other ex-shipmates who remember him. Contact Garth Stapleton at garthstapleton@googlemail.com or write to 4903 Winthrop Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46205, USA.

Service Numbers: Reg and a number of members at the RNA Mithcam would like some help with WW2 service numbers. They know that the P, C and D of the number indicated the Port Division and the J, M and K the branch, but the older numbers ended in X. It is the X (as in PJX) that they cannot fathom out. If you can help contact Reg Osborn, 55 Norbury Hill, London, SW16 3LA.

Singapore: Seeking information relating to Capt George Mullock DSO, RN, FRGS, former Extended Defences Officer at Singapore 1939-1942 captured whilst in command of ML Mary Rose near Singapore and interned at Changi, Karenko, Shirakawa and Manchuria. In command of minefields and external defences for the colony. Does any reader remember either him or members of the staff at extended defences? Contact Robert Hughes at mullockmorgans@yahoo.co.uk or write to 48 Trem Arfon, Llanrwst, Co. Conwy, LL26 0BP.

Lt Cdr Ronald Clark Spyers: Does anyone know Ronald. He joined the RN in 1920 and reached the rank of PO, he was later appointed commissioned gunner in August 1941 when in HMS Ajax. Ray is interested to find out if he was in Ajax during the Battle of the River Plate in December 1939. He was Mentioned in Despatches in 1945 and later joined the Sea Cadet Corps. If you have any information could you contact Ray Tait at rm1066@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01942 201692 or 2 Meadowdale Drive, Wigan, WN5 8AL.

Telegraphist: Alan is researching his father's service record in the Navy during and after WW2 (1943-46) and has not been able to identify all the ships or shore stations in his records. He served as a Telegraphist on a number of ships including Dido and Royal Scotsman. Alan would be grateful if anyone can provide more details of the following: Salsette, November 1943 (duration unknown); Odyssey, 1944; LC(L)136 taking part in amphibious landings on the island of Elba (although this isn't in his service records); HMS All Hallows: January-February 1945, HMS Hoo, March-May 1945; his personal papers mention Maloja (on which he died in August 1943) and Empire Prosperous, one of which probably took him to or from Bombay. Contact Alan Blyth at a.blyth@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 020 8546 2477 or write to 50 Willoughby Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 6LJ.

HMS Widgeon, Kingfisher class corvette 1938-47: Information is sought about this ship or her captain Lt Cdr Leonard A White by his daughter Susan. Does anyone know if there is an association for the ships of this class? Please contact Susan Crampton at scrampton@iol.ie or write to Knockduff, Ferns, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Republic of Ireland.

HMS Wolfhound: Jill would like to hear from any sailors who served with her dad, George Arthur Grant, during World War 2. He served on HMS Wolfhound as a Chief Petty Officer Cook. He was born on March 12 1918 and was from Gateshead. Sadly he died in March 1997, and there were fellow-servicemen at his funeral, however she was too distraught to say much to them at the time. She would love to hear memories of her dad as a young man. Contact Jill Grant at grantidge59@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01622 674667.

Sports lottery

May 19: £5,000 – POAEM(M) A Dustan, 702 NAS, Yeovilton; £1,500 – MEM1 S West, SFM HMS Drake; £500 – Lt S M Pearch, CHF HQ.

May 26: £5,000 – Capt B Lewis RM, UKLFCSG; £1,500 – Ldrvr R Ellis, HMS Endurance; £500 – OM(SSM)1 C J Street, HMS Talent.

June 2: £5,000 – Lt M J Sykes, HMS Monmouth; £1,500 – Cpl S Westwood, CTCRM; £500 – OM(W)2 R P Barratt, HMS Montrose

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Honours

Queen's Birthday Honours

Order of the Bath
CB: Rear Adm Kim John Borley, Vice Adm Timothy James Hamilton Laurence
Order of the British Empire
CBE: Capt Clive Charles Carruthers Johnston; Rear Adm Ian Peter Gordon Tibbitt
OBE: Capt Paul Martin Bennett, Cdr Paul Thomas Docherty, Cdr Roy Keith John Hill, Cdr Patrick Michael Christopher O'Brien, Cdr Nelson James Elliott Reynolds RNR, Cdr Christopher Alwyn Slocombe, Cdr Richard Charles Thompson

Where are you now?

HMS Anchorite: Looking for any crew who took Anchorite out to Singapore, also who joined the 4th Submarine Squadron 1958 and also those who took Telemachus home. Think it is time for a reunion. Contact Ian Scholan 'Scobie' at extension-lead@hotmail.com or tel: 01302 872075 or write to 6 Alexander Street, Bentley, Doncaster, DN5 0NY.

HMS Berwick: Rod 'Scouse' Grundy is seeking old shipmates that knew him especially **Trev Ladyman**. He served onboard Berwick 1977-78 in the Gunners Mess, Norfolk 1978-81 in the Comms Mess and did the Far East Group 8 deployment, also Sheffield 1981-82 leaving the ship just before the Falklands. Contact Rod at koprod@hotmail.co.uk, tel: 0151 474 0776 or write to 63 Rimrose Valley Road, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 9TE.

HMS Blake: Looking for R K Smith (Stoker) who served on Blake 1970-72. Contact Malcolm Yeeles (ME2) at MalYeeles@aol.com, tel: 01423 765443 or write to 11 Kitchen Place, Stewartby, Beds, MK43 9PN.

HMS Caprice: Were you on Caprice during her world cruise in 1968? If so why not contact the HMS Caprice (1968) Association? We have 70 members from a ships company of 250 and would like to hear from any of the other 180. Contact Graham Latter at g@latter.karoo.co.uk, see the website: www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk or tel/fax: 01482 632276.

CINCIBERLANT: Ian Smith (former RN Photographer) is looking to contact Lt Hendricks who served with him at CINCIBERLANT, near Lisbon, Portugal, 1997-99. He was PA to the Commodore and was married to Liz. I have some photographs that belong to them that I would like to return. If you can help contact Ian Smith at iggysmith@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01752 550540.

Commonwealth Sea Cadet Camp, Canada 1949: Doug is seeking any other cadets who attended this camp in 1949. He represented Farnham Sea Cadets at the time. Contact D Turk at doug.turk@ntlworld.com or tel: 01252 403655.

Keith M Davies: Seeking any friends or relatives of Keith who served in the RN from 1957 to 1970+. He was born in Erdington, Birmingham 1938, and married to Susan. If you can help with any information please contact Derek Fowler at dgfowler@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01543 252170.

HMS Dolphin: Ken is tracing his cousin Mark William Kent. Mark was born on Dec 30 1955 in the Queen Mary hospital in Stratford London, so now aged 51. His parents were William Thomas and Rita Dorothy May, of Southend-on-Sea. Ken knows that in Dec 1978 Mark, a submariner, was released from hospital and was able to spend Christmas with his mum and dad, then reported to HMS Dolphin at Gosport. On retirement it is believed that he went to the USA to marry a lady he met whilst in service. His cousins Valerie and Ken are keen to find him. Contact Kenneth Adams at ken.adams@ntlworld.com or tel: 028 9058 7301.

David Kent: Seeking David (50), an ex-pupil of Fishguard High School. He is invited to a reunion on August 25 at the Fishguard Bay Hotel. Please contact Helen Preece at Preeceh@yahoo.co.uk or write to 62 Bishop's Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 1LW.

HMS Gambia/Type: Patricia is trying to trace the whereabouts of Robert 'Bob' Chaffie who served on Gambia and Tyne. Bob and her father Dennis Bown joined the Royal Navy together in 1942. Her father served on Raider and Diadem. They both lived in North London and were good mates before and after WW2. Bob's wife Dolly and her mum Violet were also good friends. Her parents moved out of London and unfortunately lost touch. If anyone has any information that they think may be helpful please contact Patricia Peck at patricia.peck2@ntlworld.com or write to 10 Redfield Close, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1TN.

HMS Ganges 1957-59, Collingwood 43 Mess 352/361: Seeking George Grant, Barry Harman, Jervis Markham, Winterburn, Harry Ingles, Jeff Butler, Dave Frater, Dave Charles, Mick Sheppard, Mick Leonard. Please contact J W Curtis on 01780 754291.

Hong Kong Flotilla: John Fleming is keen to hear from anyone that served in the flotilla from 1949 to 1958, especially on the HDMLs. Please contact John at johnfleming32@yahoo.co.uk or write to 3 Tsan Tuen Road, Cheung Chau, Hong Kong.

HMS Intrepid: John Fortune retired from the Canadian Navy and has been trying to find news of a couple of guys he got the pleasure to work with in 1979 on Intrepid while they were visiting the port of Halifax Nova Scotia Canada. They were both MAS: LSMA Robert 'Soapy' Watson who was part of the sickbay staff and the other was Ian Fraser-Ward who was a Royal Marine medic on board for this trip. Both these men spent the on-shore time at my house with me and my wife and John would love to contact

MBE: WO1(MEM) Martin John Allen, POAEM(E) Timothy Barnicoat, WO1(Diver) Neil Andrew Brunton, Lt Cdr David Cattroll, WO1(AET) Simon Andrew Hancock, Maj Steven John Hussey RM, CPO(Logs/Pers) Colin Roger Johnson, CPO(COXN)SM) Iain Menzies Mackenzie, Acting Lt Cdr Wayne James McGrath, CPO(CIS) Sara Jayne Moseley, Capt Mark Rand RM, Lt Cdr Christopher Edmund Maurice Saunders, WO1(CIS) Christopher John Smith, Lt Douglas William Wright
Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal
QVRM: Cdr Nigel Peter Bassett RNR

them again – it was a hell of a week. He lost contact after the Falklands War. He cannot be sure but he thinks Robert's wife was Elizabeth and at the time was single. Contact John Fortune at johnfortune@sasktel.net or write to 1511 Cree Crescent, Moose Jaw, SK, Canada, S6H 7G2.

HMS Khedive: Victor C Watson known as 'Charlie' served in Khedive from 1943 to 1946, when she was returned to Norfolk, Virginia, USA. If anyone remembers Charlie they can contact him at Unit 71 – 1241 Beaverbrook Avenue, London, ON, Canada, N6H 5P1.

Richard Marshall: Wondering what happened to Richard, who joined the Royal Navy in 1974-75, whose home was in Ilkley Yorkshire. Contact Kathryn Fotheringham (née Waite), 20 Elgar Crescent, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire, WR9 7SP or tel: 07884 251160.

HMS Nelson: Wendy Monks (driver) trying to find friends from HMS Nelson 1974-76, RNAS Culdrose in 1976-78. Contact Wendy at david.monks@virgin.net or tel: 07989 456430.

Paul 'Fritz' Newman, ex Chief Chef: Paul would like to contact any ex puffers, pusserses and bootnecks that served with him whilst in the RN. He now lives in tropical North Queensland and offers any of those shipmates travelling to that area somewhere to 'sling a hammock' and enjoy some of the Far North's hospitality. Also seeking POW-ren Vicky Keeble ex Rooke, Culdrose and Nelson. Contact Paul Newman at fritzer@bigpond.com or write to 126 Constance Street, Mareeba, Queensland, 4880, Australia.

HMS Nubian, 1964-66: Dave Millward is still looking for Pete 'Taff' Price known as the Avon man, and Paul 'Bungy' Williams (Watchmen Drummer) who served with him on the Nubian as Communicators between these dates. If you are out there or anyone knows of their whereabouts please contact Dave at parklane@waitrose.com, tel: 01622 729692 or write to 2 Fernhill Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9BL.

Bill Vaughan A/LRO(G) HMS Onslaught, 1974-76: Looking for the best crew that sailed the seas. How come we haven't had a reunion after the greatest paying off dinner and dance ever? It would be great to see old friends again. Give me a call on 01482 506624, or drop me a line to Bill Vaughan, 3 Glebe Court Street, Hull HU3 6AR.

Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association: January 27 1958. Does that date ring a bell with you? Pete Stophor, John Grant, Jack McBride, John McGlynn, Bill Cox, Jerry Payne and the rest of the Electrical Branch who all met up in 142 Mess HMS Collingwood for the first time that day. Where are you all now? Contact Mike Crowe, for a '50 Up' Get Together', Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association at mike.crowe1@btinternet.com, tel: 01983 404727 or write to 7 Heath Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG.

HMS Sembawang: Trying to locate Roger 'Jan' Skinner who served on 847 Squadron based at HMS Sembawang during 1969-71, who was an LEM(Air). The first squadron re-union is in October 2007 and wish to inform him. Contact Steve Millard at Stephen.Millard@kbr.com or write to Baku Deep Water Jackets Factory, Salyan Highway 83, Baku AZ 1083, Azerbaijan.

Submariner: Taff 'Laurie' Dymock is trying to contact CPO Karl Lemar, ex submariner, based in Devonport late 1980s. Can anyone help? Contact Laurie Dymock at Laurie.Dymock@cliftonasset.co.uk or tel: 01275 813790 or 07970 940414.

Submarines: Seeking Dennis 'Yorkie' Marshall who served in Revenge, Churchill and Conqueror. His home town was Bradford. Married to Kath and last known to be living in Thornton/Fairweather areas. Believed to be working for British Rail. Lost contact with his brother in 1972 when they worked together at HMS Neptune. Contact Keith Priestley (brother) and wife Carol on 023 9264 1798 or write to 20 Sandy Brow, Purbrook, Hants, PO7 5JP.

HMS Usk: Jack Hipkiss served on this ship up to the end of the last war. Is there anyone who also served aboard, or anyone who remembers Jack? Contact his sister Sandra Perkins at don.42@tiscali.co.uk, tel: 01746 181772 or write to 42 Greenway Avenue, Alveley, Bridgnorth, WV15 6NY.

HMS Weston: Seeking contact with any crew members of Weston, who served on the ship during May/June 1940. Contact Tomasz Kawa at tkawa.gpo@yahoo.ca or write to 511 Maplewood Lane, London, Ontario, N6H 0A5, Canada.

Wrens: Seeking information about Elaine David (née Reynolds). If anyone knows of her whereabouts or contact details can you ask her to contact Denise (aka 'The little fat one'). It is Lizzy's 50th birthday soon and we must do something. Contact Denise Brereton 3 Chancery Lane, Riverside, Cardiff, CF11 6DZ.

Deaths

Lt Cdr Michael Paynter Grubb. Entered Royal Naval College Dartmouth 1951 to start a 20 year career in the RN. Served in HMS Edderton 1956-57 at Harwich and Suez and Cyprus. Received a Commendation for bravery when trying to save the life of a sailor from another ship in Gibraltar. In 1960 he specialised as a clearance diving officer and was officer-in-charge of Portland Clearance Diving Team. During one hazardous salvage operation he set a world record for deep sea diving to a depth of over 400ft recorded in the Guinness Book of Records. Sailed in the splendid 'windfall yachts' which were used as RN Sail Training vessels and a lifelong member of the RN Sailing association. In 1970 he took up an appointment as an Inspector in Her Majesty's Coastguard and followed a second career. March 7. Aged 74.

Surg Cdr Jayant Abhechand 'John' Bakhai. Served 1966-95 as Senior Medical Officer in Hecate, Caledonia (Rosyth), Singapore and Gibraltar; served as Senior Ophthalmic Registrar at RNH Plymouth and a Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at RNH Haslar. May 16. Aged 68.

Capt Alasdair Watson. Volunteered as an ordinary seaman in 1940 and joined HMS Vesper the following year. Emerged from HMS King Alfred as a Lieutenant RNVR and appointed spare hand in 12th MGB Flotilla; became first lieutenant of MGB 326 taking part in Operation Biting, the daring paratroop raid on the German radar station at Bruneval in France and navigated to Yellow Beach during the Dieppe raid after which he was mentioned in dispatches. Specialised in landing and recovering agents and carrying out beach surveys and mining German convoys routes. Given command of MGB 330 in 1944 and led the first wave of landing craft to Juno beach. Joined the reserves in 1951 and promoted captain in 1963; from 1967 to 69 was ADC to the Queen and commanding officer of the RNR, Forth Division. March 25. Aged 87.

Capt C B Fetherston-Dilke. Joined RNC Dartmouth at age 13; Midshipman in the battleship Rodney and destroyers Jervis and Juno (battle of Calabria 1940); HMS Malcolm, Hurricane and in Hotham (off Normandy beaches on D-Day). Lt Cdr in Cossack (D57) 1952-54; qualified as a diver; liaison officer in Copenhagen; promoted captain and appointed to RN staff in Capetown where he was involved in the co-ordination of the RN's role in the evacuation of Tristan da Cunha in 1961. Short spells in submarine depot ships Maidstone, Adamant and Forth then went to Paris as Naval Deputy to the UK National Military representative at SHAPE. HMS Cossack Association, April 2. Aged 85.

F W 'Bill' Bartholomew. CPO. Joined Cossack (D57) as a boy in 1947 and rated Ordinary Seaman. Transferred to victualling side of the Supply & Secretariat branch and became a Caterer. After retiring he stayed on as Recruiting Officer for Lincoln area. In 1999 he set up a web site for HMS Cossack Association that won awards in 2000-01 and 02. HMS Cossack Association, March 24.

D T Hughes. AB. Served in Cossack (L03) 1940-41 and a member of the association; also served in HMS Manchester (Operation Pedestal), May 6.

Ann Macey. Associate member HMS Cossack Association, May 17.

Peter Derry. AB. Served in Warrior, Jamaica, Eagle, Tamar, Defiance, Savage, Dolphin and Venus. A long serving and active member of HMS Bruce Association. May 10. Aged 75.

Charles Frederick Heywood. Torpedoman. Chairman and a founder member of HMS Duke of York Association. Present at the sinking of the Scharnhorst, for the Atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima Boxing Day 1943 and in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender September 1945. April 29. Aged 84.

Cdr Eric Rider. Served 1960-87 at RN Engineering College Manadon, Northwood Common (Falklands) and Daedalus with FAA. May 17. Aged 65.

Rodney 'Paddy' Irvine. CMEM. Served 1965-89 at Ganges and in Charybdis, Maidstone, Nubian, Cochrane, Bomb Disposal team (Scotland), SS Canberra NP1710, Fire Fighting School (Rosyth) and HMS Plymouth. April 23. Aged 57.

Clem 'Sticks' Dodsworth RM. Joined at just 14 and served for 24 years including World War 2. He played drums in the RM Band. Was resident at the former Royal Salt Home Club (now called the Royal Maritime Club) for 40 years after leaving the RN. Presented with a plaque from the Brazilian navy in 1998 when it emerged they owned a frigate called 'Dodsworth'. May 3. Aged 95.

T J H Parr. CPO Stores. Served 1943-68 in Vanguard, Solebay and Consort. May 25. Aged 82.

Bernard Holdroyd. Leading Seaman and gun layer. Served 1939-47 in Gilroy, Glenroy, Victory, Cardiff, Excellent, Arrow (Cyprus) and Russian convoys; was shipwrecked twice and spent time recuperating in Cape Town. May 31. Aged 90.

Donald Redman. AB. Served in Amethyst during the Yangtze incident and a member of the association. May 20.

Winston Frank 'Jan' Mason. AB. Served 1963-72 in Ark Royal, Torquay, Sherraton, Triumph and Bulwark. Aged 59.

Arthur 'Tug' Wilson. PO. Aircraft Handler. Served 1953-75 in Eagle, Albion, Bulwark, RNAS Culdrose and Daedalus. June 8. Aged 71.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Anthony 'Tony' Charles Joseph Smyth. Chief Writer. Past secretary and long serving branch committee member Newton Abbot. Served RN 1947-69 and RNR 1969-78 including St George, Ceres, Drake, Vanguard, Ocean, Terror and Caledonia.

Harold Stephenson. MEA. Long serving branch committee member Newton Abbot. Served from 1951-80 in Eagle, Ark Royal, Puma, Girdleness, Danae and Ranpara.

Lt Cdr George Skinner. President Watford branch for over 25 years and life member. Joined St George 1944 and served in 20 ships ending as No 1, HMS Warrior, Northwood 1975-93. Almost 50 years service. April 30.

Ted Jones. AB. Wrexham. Served 22 years in Pickle, Dunkirk, Kenya and Hermes. April 30.

Ernest George Harris. Stoker/Mech. Bridgend. Served in Theseus, Carysfort and Newcastle. May 12. Aged 75.

Gordon Allum. LAM(L). Bolton. Served in Royal Arthur, Gosling, Daedalus, Gannet, Waxwing, Bhurunda and Bambara. May 7. Aged 81.

Robert 'Bob' Fyles. Chief Aircraft

Armourer (O) FAA. Past president Margate. Served from 1945-71 in Theseus, Ocean, Peregrine, Ark Royal, Centaur, Victorious and Hermes. May 20. Aged 78.

Jim Brown. Wishaw, Scottish Area and Area Treasurer. June 2.

John Alan Jones. CPO. Rosyth and West, branch delegate to the Scottish area. June 3.

Tony Scully. CPOWEM. Served 27 years. Deployed to Falklands in HMS Cardiff 1982. Upon discharge became an instructor for Southampton Sea Cadets; Ringwood RBL and RNA Southampton and latterly Christchurch. Aged 68.

Leonard Jack Carter. Branch vice chairman Enfield for several years. Seaman. Trained at Ganges and served on landing craft during WW2. Landing Craft Association. June 1. Aged 83.

Ron Fitt. Able Seaman. Served 1941-46. Norwich. May 9. Aged 84.

Gordon Young. Nuneaton. Served in Tactician, Tradewind and Sanguine. May 13. Aged 78.

C Nicol. Birkenhead. May.

G Luck DSC. Submariner. Birkenhead. May.

Father William Hill. Chaplain to Bridport. Although ex-RAF he had a passion for everything concerning Nelson and Trafalgar and published a book *Dorset Men at Trafalgar*. June 5.

John Russell Malcolm. F/Sgt RAF. Served throughout World War 2 and in the FAA in Barham, Courageous (survivor), Furious and Eagle. Past chairman and prominent member of Wansbeck. June 10. Aged 87.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

J 'Joe' Alford. CPO Coxn. Gosport branch. Served 1954-74 in Token, Talley-Ho, Trenchant, Sentinel, Scorch, Achelon, Artemis, Truncheon, Anchorite, Tiptoe and Aeneas. May. Aged 72.

F R 'Bob' Morby. Sto.1. Vice president Gosport branch. Served 1946-57 in Thermopylae, Tabard, Alliance and Solent. May. Aged 80.

M 'Nobby' Grant. PO Elec. Exeter branch. Served 1942-52 in P512, L23, Spitful, Truncheon, Tactician, Statesman, Sturdy, X2, Teredo, Sidon and Selene. Aged 83.

G 'George' Luck DSM. CPO Coxn. Merseyside branch. Served 1941-47 in Rorqual, P217, P339, Taurus (awarded DSM War patrols Eastern Mediterranean) and Affray. Aged 85.

G 'George' O'Donnell. Sto. Mech. Blackpool branch. Served 1951-57 in Subtle, Selene, Solent and Thermopylae. Aged 76.

R D 'Bob' Peel. Sto.1. Bury branch. Served 1943-46 in Volatile, Varne and Tanti. Aged 81.

H 'Harry' Warner. CPO Coxn. Bury branch. Served 1943-52 in Stonehenge, Templar, Tiptoe, Subtle, Achelon and Alliance. Aged 83.

W C 'Bill' Shadbolt. L/Sea. ST. Essex branch. Served 1933-45 in L56, Salmon, Clyde, Sea Lion, Thames, H33 and Shark. Aged 99.

D L 'Dave' Spencer. WO Coxn. Dolphin branch. Served 1970-90 in Revenge (S), Superb, Sceptre, Trenchant and Talent. Aged 59.

Fred Greagan. Stoker. Served 1950-62 in Taciturn, Amphion, Alcide, Alliance and Rorqual. June 5. Aged 74.

HMS NEWFOUNDLAND ASSOCIATION

Ray Wilkins. AB 1944-47; also served in Illustrious.

Norman de la Rue. PO/Wtr 1942-45; also served in Furious. February 7.

Sgt Eric Rodgers RM. 1943-44; also served in Devonshire, Rodney, Duke of York, Highflyer (Trinco). March 12.

Jack Wyatt. Stoker 1954-56. March 15.

Sam Hawkins. Boy 1/c 1944-47; also served in Glory, Verman Bay, Daring, Diana, Trafalgar, Meon, Beachampton and Euryalus. April 2.

Russell Knight RM. 1956-58; also served in Vanguard, Cleopatra, Protector, Birmingham, Jutland and 45 Cdo RM. May 14.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS

Lt Cdr N A Andrews. Served: Venerable, Hawea, Tutira, Victory, Mull of Galloway, Woodbridge Haven, Vernon, Palliser, Terror and Sultan.

Principal Matron S R P Barton QARNNS Sub Lt C R Bates RNR. Served: Eflin, Forth, Torbay, Newcastle, Racehorse and Morpeth Castle.

Lt Cdr J N Carey. Served: Goldcrest, Falcon and Seahawk.

Cdr P S Cotes. Served: President, Seahawk, Urchin, Ashanti, Osprey, Pembroke, and Fife.

Lt Cdr W V P Crutchley. Served Striker, Hornet, Malcolm, Tyne, Murray and Ashton.

Col J J Day RM.

Col L Goldstraw. Served: Challenger, Gamecock, Vidal and Victory.

Lt J H T Jones. Served: Goldcrest, Ariel, Daedalus, Cochrane, Excellent and Victorious.

Lt Cdr J C Lapage. Served: Abdiel, Bideford, Cleveland, Brave, Albacore, Cockatrice, Liverpool, Daedalus, Implacable, Sydney, President and Barfoss.

Third Officer J M Marsden WRNS.

Lt Cdr C D Newton DSC. Served: Liverpool, Erebus, Bleasdale, Royal Arthur, Gravelines, Largo Bay and Ark Royal.

Lt Cdr J W Northam. Served: Ambrose, Ariel, Ark Royal, Heron, President, Seahawk and Collingwood.

Lt Cdr R J Pitt. Served: Renown, Faulkner, Antelope, Duncan, Trollope, Hague, Sea Eagle, Devonshire, Vanguard, Mull of Galloway, Armada, Chevron and Leymour.

Lt Cdr F J Powell. Served: Lowestoft, Excellent, Cleopatra and Intrepid.

Lt Cdr G W Searle DSC RNVR. Served: Dolphin.

Lt Cdr C A Stickle. Served: Cerberus, Ausonia, Caledonia, Excellent and Osprey.

Lt Cdr C W Terrell. Served: Constance, Daedalus, Vidal, Terror, Scott, President, Hartland Point, Safeguard and Thornham.

Cdr W N L Woodley. Served: Kenya, Victory, Ceres, Broadsword, Dampier, Osprey and Temeraire.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION W Beedle. Served on board LCI(S) 535.

N Walker. Served on board LCI(L) 104, 122 and 125. April 11.

F C Hooper. Served on board LST 401. May 2.

J E Langley. Served with LCT Flotilla 32 (Base staff). May 4.

D R Sinclair. Served on board LBV 82 and LST 383. May 22.



● FGS Berlin arrives at Portsmouth

Bell back on Berlin

THE BELL of World War 1 German battleship SMS Oldenburg is wending its way home to its native country after a 80-year sojourn in a British museum.

The bell from the Helgoland-class battleship was presented to the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth in 1927.

A ceremony took place on board the 20,000-ton German auxiliary ship Berlin at Portsmouth, in the UK to take part in operational sea training.

The bell will find a new home at the German Naval Museum in Wilhelmshaven – and its return coincides with the launch of a

new Oldenburg, a German Navy corvette.

Dr Colin White, director of the Royal Naval Museum, said: "When the request came for the bell to be returned to Germany, the museum staff and trustees were happy that it should return home as a symbol of reconciliation and of the friendship that now exists between our two nations – and above all between our two navies."

World War 2 veteran Cdr Eddie Grenfell played a key part in linking the two sides – he said: "Since 1945 I have engaged myself in encouraging friendship between our two nations."

"The return of the Oldenburg ship's bell is a symbolic gesture between us – allies of the sea."

Police seek RN help

POLICE in Salford are appealing for help from the Royal Navy to trace the next of kin of a 53-year-old man from Salford.

Colin Maguire, born May 5 1954, was found dead at home on May 15. There are no suspicious circumstances surrounding his death. However the police are anxious to contact members of Mr Maguire's family.

It is believed that Mr Maguire was a chef in the Royal Marines based at Plymouth.

If you can help with information about the dead man's family or background, please contact the Coroner's Liaison Officer at Swinton Police Station on 0161



Armed Forces take the Next Step

THE ARMED Forces and the MOD have shown their commitment to improving representation amongst ethnic minority communities by signing up for the Next Step Foundation's Diversity Mark scheme.

The MOD is the first public sector organisation to commit to the Diversity Mark, holders of which actively encourage job applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds and help with their career development.

Diversity Mark holders also encourage senior ethnic minority staff to act as role models and monitor progress towards these commitments.

A certificate to acknowledge the MOD's commitment to diversity was received by the Under Secretary of State for Defence, Derek Twigg, and MOD Permanent Under Secretary and Civil Service Diversity Champion, Bill Jeffrey, from Keith Vaz MP, patron of the Next Step Foundation.

Mr Twigg said: "I am delighted that the MOD has joined this scheme."

"The MOD and Armed Forces are determined to become more representative of our diverse society, harnessing the wealth of talent and skills of individuals from different ethnic and religious groups."

Mr Vaz said: "Having the MOD sign the Next Step Diversity Mark as the first public sector organisation is a real demonstration of their commitment to diversity at all levels."

"I hope other departments will follow their example and join the scheme."

The Foundation is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation that promotes diversity and leadership issues in the UK.

Thresholds lowered

CHANGES to the MOD's defence contract advertising thresholds are set to open up more areas of industry to supply goods and services.

With an annual spend of £33 billion, the MOD is the UK's single largest customer, and leads the rest of Europe in the transparency of its tender and contract opportunities and procedures.

New plans to advertise more of its lower-value contracts as of the end of last month show that the MOD aims to reaffirm its engagement with a larger part of the supplier community.

Philip Margerison, head of the MOD's Defence Suppliers Service, welcomed the move, saying: "The lowering of contract thresholds is good news for all businesses that currently supply to, or are looking to supply, the MOD, and also for buying teams within the MOD."

Contracts are advertised in MOD Defence Contracts Bulletin magazine and online at www.contracts.mod.uk

They will also be published at www.supply2.gov.uk



The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Repair organisations will merge in 2008

THE MOD has announced it is to merge the Army Base Repair Organisation (ABRO) and the Defence Aviation Repair Agency (DARA) to form a new defence support group.

The new group will be formally created by April 2008, and will focus on providing a competitive in-house maintenance, repair, overhaul

and upgrade capability in support of the Armed Forces, operating where appropriate in partnership with industry.

Lord Drayson, the Minister for Defence Equipment and Support, said: "In ABRO and DARA, the MOD owns two maintenance, repair and overhaul businesses that have considerable and in some cases unique practical know-how in maintaining land and air-based military equipment."

"This announcement will ensure that the MOD retains the intellectual property and design skills required to maintain operational sovereignty in key areas as set out in the Defence Industrial and Technology Strategies."

"We will consult closely with staff and trades unions as the plans for the new organisation develop during the course of 2007."

The merger will be subject to trades union consultation and appropriate Parliamentary consent.

ABRO employs some 2,100 staff, and has a head office at Andover.

DARA, launched in 1999 when the RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency and the Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation came together, has a head office and large aircraft facility at St Athan in South Wales.

The rotary wing element is based at Gosport, DARA electronics at Deeside in Flintshire and components at Almondsbank in Perth.

DARA itself is undergoing a major transformation programme; the Fast Jet and Engines business closed in March this year, the Rotary and Components businesses are currently going through a sale process, and the MOD has already announced the retention of the electronics business at Sealand.

A decision will be taken shortly on whether the best value for defence can be secured by transferring the Rotary and Components businesses outside the MOD.

If not, these business units will also form part of the new defence support organisation.

Trained strength at 96.8 per cent

THE latest MOD manning figures shows that the UK Armed Forces are currently at 96.8 per cent full-time trained strength.

As at April 1 this year, full-time trained strength of the UK armed Forces was 177,760 against a target of 183,610.

That figure comprises 172,840 UK regular forces, 1,590 full-time reserve services personnel and 3,340 Gurkhas.

There were also 17,590 untrained UK regulars and 370 untrained Gurkhas.

There has been a 6.7 per cent increase in the number of new recruits that have joined the Armed Forces – 1,210 up on the previous year.

Since April 1 2006, the proportion of females in the UK regular forces has risen 0.3 per cent to 11.6 per cent for officers, and by 0.1 per cent to 8.8 per cent for other ranks.

The percentage of UK regular forces from ethnic minority backgrounds continues to rise; on April 1 the figure stood at 5.8 per cent, up 0.3 per cent on the previous year.

The MOD figures from November 1 2006 are provisional because of the introduction of the new personnel admin system.



• WO Jeff Sheppard RN and Sgt Kev Bagshaw of the Army testing socks in the boardroom of HJ Hall with sales director Anton Jenkins

£3m foots the bill for socks contract

WO JEFF Sheppard normally spends his days interviewing potential recruits for the RN at the Armed Forces Careers Office in Leicester.

But for one day he swapped his desk for the boardroom of HJ Hall – trying out a range of socks.

The Hinckley manufacturer has just won a £3 million two-year contract to supply socks to the Armed Forces.

Trying various ranges, Jeff said: "These socks are thick and comfortable – ideal for wear in cold climates."

"It was a very different day spent modelling socks but it gave me another opportunity to promote the Royal Navy within the local community."



Managing director of HJ Hall, Guy March, said: "We are delighted to have been chosen to supply socks to the MOD."

"The production volumes associated with the contract will provide a solid foundation for our manufacturing plant in Hinckley and will secure jobs in the company

for the duration of the contract."

The majority of the socks to be knitted will be wool/nylon based, but there will also be a supply of more specialist lines, such as the Coolmax Desert socks for use in extreme climates, and cotton-rich physical training socks.

The contract with HJ Hall, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary, will be managed by the Defence Clothing Integrated Project Team (DCIPT), which is part of the Defence Equipment and Support Organisation (DE&S) within the MOD.

Col Silas Suchanel, of the DCIPT, said: "We are pleased to award the contract to HJ Hall and Co, who are a long-standing and valued supplier to the MOD."



• The Royal Navy NETS team

NETS benefit for potential students

THE NAVAL Education and Training Service has been set up to help everyone in the Naval service achieve their potential.

Whether you are located near a Learning Centre, or based at sea or in an outstation, then NETS Officers are keen to visit and help you achieve your aspirations.

NETS has been created to bring a consistent and focussed approach to professional and personal development, and will ensure that education and training is delivered to all sailors.

Cdr Jerry Townshend, the new boss, said: "We have pulled together the Base Education Centres, Waterfront Learning Centres and importantly the FEDOs, in order to provide a seamless and unified approach to the education and training we offer sailors at or near the waterfront."

That said, effectively all learning assets are now part of the wider organisation and fall under the NETS banner.

There are NETS Learning Centres in Portsmouth, Faslane and Devonport, and sailors and their families can enrol on courses in English, maths, computing, languages and other options.

Equally, these Federated Learning Centres will facilitate a wide variety of Targeted Employment Module and other

training to prepare personnel for jobs at sea at the point of need.

From now on FEDOs will be known as NETS Officers, and there are more of them, according to Lt Cdr Dan Vincent.

"We are asking NETS Officers to do a bit more than the FEDOs used to, and in order that we can meet our target of getting to every unit every 18 months we now have an extra person, bringing our numbers up to nine," he said.

A NETS visit will deliver education, personal and professional development to the 'workplace', and each member of a ship's company will be briefed on the opportunities available through a one-to-one interview to talk about career progression, promotion opportunities and coping with the transition to civilian life.

Planned visits for the future include HMS Albion, HMS Enterprise and HMS Victorious, and visits to shore establishments without a Naval Education Centre such as MOD Abbey Wood and air stations at Cottesmore and Wittering.

To arrange a visit from a NETS Officer contact the NETS Ops Team on 9380 20698.

To learn more about what NETS can offer you through the Learning Centres then drop in or call 9380 21133.

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Employers back reservists

MORE than 100 of the UK's largest employers have publicly pledged their support for the Reserve Forces and backed a campaign to get businesses involved.

The group of companies, including BT, Tesco, Shell and Barclays, together employ more than 2.5 million people.

All of these companies have signed a statement of support, recognising the courage and commitment shown by reservists.

And more than three-quarters of them also support their reservists by giving them additional time off for training.

The campaign aims to secure similar pledges of support from other British employers in both the public and private sectors.

Launching the campaign in Basra, where he was visiting BT staff mobilised with the Territorial Army, BT Chairman Sir Christopher Bland said: "These men and women serve alongside their colleagues in the Regular Forces with courage and dedication, often at considerable personal sacrifice."

"They are a vital part of the nation's Armed Forces and deserve the support of their employers every step of the way."

"We at BT admire their commitment and will continue to support all current and future employees in the Reserve Forces."

A full list of companies is on www.sabre.mod.uk and the site will be updated to provide a resource for Reservists to access information about employers.

SABRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers), which is co-ordinating the campaign, is urging all UK employers to create written policies on the Reserve Forces, to make their support clear to all staff and managers.



Smart procurement

ONE essential component for a successful military operation is intelligence.

And that element, often overlooked, now has a champion in the shape of Northrop Grumman Mission Systems Europe (NGMSE), who have commissioned the Fleet Intelligence Trophy.

Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, Chief of Staff (Capability) received the trophy from Peter Davison, Managing Director of NGMSE, as part of the Northrop Grumman Maritime Open Day.

Rear Admiral Wilcocks said: "The need for good intelligence to support military

● **Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks takes delivery of the Northrop Grumman Fleet Intelligence Trophy from (left) Dr Graham Thornton, Head of Northrop Grumman UK, and (right) Peter Davison, Managing Director of Northrop Grumman Mission Systems Europe**

operations has never been so great.

"The Armed Forces, and in particular the Royal Navy, have recognised this and new, exciting initiatives, such as the new Intelligence Specialist and the revised training package for officers and ratings, will make significant improvements to intelligence support across the Naval Service."

"This magnificent trophy will go a long way to providing some much-needed official recognition for the hard work of our men and women in this important sphere of warfare."

Primarily intended as an operational award, the trophy will be included in the annual Fleet Warfare Effectiveness Awards, and will go the individual or unit within the RN, RM or RFA which has made "a noteworthy contribution to Naval or Joint Intelligence."

Survey reply rates 'disappointingly low'

RESULTS of the RN/RM continuous attitude survey (CAS) carried out last summer have been published.

And although organisers thanked those who took part, they noted that response rates for both the RN and the Corps were "disappointingly low".

So what are the main findings of the survey?

Indications are that personnel are content with security of employment, amount of responsibility they are given and variety of tasks in their current role.

Personnel reported that they were proud to be part of the RN or RM, they had pride in their uniform and believed they were treated fairly.

However, there was a lot of dissatisfaction with the X-factor, the quality of equipment and the amount of over-stretch.

Royal Marines further reported that they were dissatisfied with earnings and allowances, and did not believe they reflected their true worth.

Evidence from the Royal Marines CAS was used in making the case for the RM Financial Retention Incentive, which was recently awarded.

The findings from the 2006 CAS are being used to inform and influence the Armed Forces Pay Review Body reviews of the X-factor and Submarine Pay and the Strategic Remuneration Review – the AFPRB and the tri-Service project looking at the impact of our current operational tempo on personnel.

In addition, the findings will be used to shape and inform a whole myriad of other personnel projects.

The annual CAS is your opportunity to tell senior management about how you feel about life in the RN or RM.

Results from the survey measure your level of satisfaction or otherwise with Navy and Marines life.

To gain maximum benefit from the survey and ensure the results carry some weight, and your views

are heard, the response rate needs to be maximised – so make sure you complete the next survey.

The RN and RM surveys are being harmonised with those of the Army and RAF, so results can be benchmarked against the other Services.

The next survey will be sent out in the autumn – so make your views heard and take time to complete it.

Copies of the full reports from the 2006 surveys can be found on RNWeb and the Technical Annexes are available on the MOD Freedom of Information (FOI) website.

The results of the survey have high visibility – they are passed to Ministers' offices, are fed back to the Navy Board and are used with other sources to influence and inform policies to the benefit of the individual and their families.



● The Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso Maha at the Armed Forces Buddhist Community Conference

Conferences raise awareness

CONFERENCES organised for Muslims and Buddhists in the Armed Forces have been staged at Amport House.

The Muslim Community Conference was organised and hosted by Imam Asim Hafiz, Muslim Chaplain to the Armed Forces, and brought to Amport House – the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre – Muslims from all three Services who met people from common religious and cultural backgrounds.

Several of the attendees commented on how much they valued being able to pray as part of a congregation, an experience many of them had not had for some time.

The conference attracted notable speakers, MOD and civilian.

A message of support was given

by Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

The concluding address was given by Rear Admiral Amjad Hussain, Director General (Weapons), who welcomed this event as further evidence of the progress that has been made since he joined the Navy in 1976.

The Buddhist Community Conference was hosted by Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, Buddhist Chaplain to the Armed Forces, and encouraged Buddhists and other interested individuals from the three Services to meet and learn more about Buddhist teachings and meditation.

The Head Chaplains of all three Services attended both conferences and answered questions from the attendees on a range of subjects

from support given to Muslims and Buddhists in the Forces to questions about Christianity.

Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy, the Venerable John Green, said: "I think that the conferences show two important things."

"The first is that although there are real differences between world faiths, this doesn't need to lead to hostility."

"These conferences showed a real will to realise the unifying principle of faith."

"Second, they showed that there is a real awareness of the importance of religion and the importance of faith in the Services as well as the importance of making provision for other world faiths in our chaplaincy service, which in itself has raised awareness of the service."

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Pivotal role for 'sloop of war'



● An RAF Victor tanker on the hardstanding of Wideawake airfield on Ascension Island during the Falklands campaign

IT IS easy to overlook the pivotal role played in the recovery of the Falklands by a "Sloop of War of the smaller class" commissioned in 1815.

But without the former stone frigate HMS Ascension, Operation Corporate might never have got off the ground.

The isolated volcanic outcrop was manned in 1815 by Royal Marines to deter French attempts to rescue Napoleon Bonaparte, imprisoned on St Helena 750 miles to the south-east.

And it was the isolated location of Ascension Island, 1,000 miles from the African coast, which has made it such a valuable asset for the Royal Navy, and others, since.

The island was first recorded by Portuguese navigator Alphonse d'Albuquerque on Ascension Day in 1503, but its bleak, arid countenance – and the lack of a natural harbour – put most mariners off visiting.

A spring was discovered in 1701 in the centre of the island, and with a permanent garrison in place, Ascension became a convenient stopping point for shipping heading east and west as well as north and south.

Royal Navy anti-slave trade patrols off West Africa in the early 19th Century were resupplied from Ascension, and with the arrival of warplanes, the island maintained its status.

Under a lease arrangement with the UK, America built an airstrip, named Wideawake after a breed of bird found on the island, to act as a stopping point for aircraft flying into Africa, the Middle East and Europe in World War 2 – between 1943 and 1945 25,000 planes passed through.

The first aircraft to land at the new facility in its strange lunar surroundings was a modest Stringbag from HMS Archer.

Even long-distance communications required a convenient half-way house; at the end of the 19th Century the first underwater cable connecting the UK and South Africa linked up on Ascension, and more recently the American space agency NASA built a tracking station on the island, and the BBC established its short-wave Atlantic Relay Station.

Wideawake airfield fell into disuse after the war, but the Cold War reignited interest, and the Americans built up the facility – so much so that its runway, almost two miles long, was a designated emergency landing point for the Space Shuttle.

And as events unfolded in the South Atlantic over the spring of 1982, the presence of an overseas territory of the UK almost exactly halfway between the motherland and the Falklands was of utmost importance.

It was tiny, just 35 square miles, not far from the Equator, boasting by a hot, breezy climate.

It had no natural harbour.

And it was cursed by clouds



of abrasive volcanic dust, which rapidly eroded everything from the tyres on vehicles to the inside of jet engines.

It was far from ideal – but it was a far better bet than St Helena, which had no airfield at all.

At the beginning of April 1982 the population of Ascension was barely into four figures, all connected with the various organisations and companies operating from the island, including the BBC, Pan-Am, NASA and Cable and Wireless.

The pier at Clarence Bay was the only sea landing, and was generally used less than once a month because of dangerous and unpredictable sea conditions.

But as the Operation Corporate Task Group headed out from the UK and Gibraltar into the Atlantic there was an explosion of activity at Ascension, co-ordinated by Capt Bob McQueen, who won widespread praise for his calmness and pragmatism as Commander of the newly-designated Forward Operating Base.

To be frank, this unpromising speck of land became one hell of a dump, presided over by the tiny but effective Naval Party 1222.

At its peak, during the struggle to retake the Falklands, there were an extra 1,500 people at Ascension to support the efforts in the South Atlantic.

The airfield, operated by the US, claimed to be the busiest



● A Royal Navy Sea King moves stores at Wideawake Airfield; in the background are three RAF Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft



● The interior of Ascension Island today, close to 'Bunk Bed City', the transit accommodation for passengers delayed en route to and from the Falklands

in the world on one day, having achieved more aircraft movements than O'Hare Field in Chicago.

At its busiest there were 800 air movements a day, on an airfield which had been built for around 50 such movements a day.

Wideawake was finally living up to its name.

Much of the activity involved trans-shipment of stores and supplies, flown in from the UK and passed on south.

Lighters and barges made Clarence Bay a busy port, and helicopters were constantly aloft – the men of 845 NAS D Flight shifted 1,562 tons of stores and 3,000 passengers in just over three months.

The bulk of southbound Task Group ships benefited from the

chance to pick up essential gear and re-arrange their manifest by calling in for a few days.

But Ascension also had an offensive role, as the base for the RAF's Operation Black Buck.

This saw a Vulcan bomber, supported by 11 Victor tankers, fly a 16-hour mission from Wideawake to bomb the runway at Stanley airfield in the Falklands.

Although just one bomb hit the runway, the 8,000-mile raid proved that the RAF's reach was considerable – and there were plenty in Argentina who suddenly realised that they were within range.

The Vulcan flew 16 hours, and the Victors more than 100 hours between them.

In all, over 7,000 tons of stores and 6,000 passengers passed through during the conflict, helicopters were assembled and equipment fashioned.

Survivors from HMS Sheffield and the Atlantic Conveyor, were brought there for transport back to the UK, and a large party of Argentine prisoners of war captured in South Georgia were deposited on Ascension by RFA Tidespring, for onward passage by air to their homeland.

Service on Ascension

A SERVICE of commemoration to mark the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War has been held on Ascension Island.

Some 200 islanders and visiting dignitaries were at St Mary's Anglican Church to mark Ascension's role.

Canon Clive Duncan, who led the service, focused his prayers on those who died in the conflict.

Following the service the Union Flag was hoisted above Ascension's main village.

Many in the congregation had played a direct role in helping British forces reach the Falklands.

Island life

1 Ascension Island is a volcanic outcrop rising from close to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge to a height of 2,817ft above sea level, – the highest point being Green Mountain.

2 There are 44 distinct craters on Ascension, all classified as dormant – but not extinct. The last major volcanic eruption is believed to have occurred some 600 years ago.

3 Ascension is a dependency of the British Overseas Territory of St Helena.

4 It lies just south of the equator in the South Atlantic with a population of about 1,100.

5 Sea level temperatures range between 68°F and 88°F.

6 Ascension is home to the earth tracking station for the European Space Agency's Ariane rocket programme.

7 There are five distinct settlements on Ascension – Georgetown, the 'capital', residential Two Boats, Traveller's Hill (home to the MOD garrison), cat Hill, the American garrison, and various buildings on Green Mountain.

8 Green turtles come ashore on Ascension's beaches to lay their eggs between January and May – their presence caused some disruption to British amphibious exercises in 1982.

9 It is also a haven for the sooty tern or 'wideawake', and sees boobies, Ascension frigate birds, petrels, mynah birds and canaries.

10 Ascension is accessible to civilians by air or sea – but there is a cost. MOD-charter air-bridge flights from RAF Brize Norton do not come cheap, an APEX return being in excess of £1,000, and seats on the eight-and-a-half hour flight are strictly limited.

11 RMS St Helena steams between Portland and Cape Town, calling in at Ascension, St Helena and, occasionally Tristan da Cunha. UK to Ascension takes a fortnight.

12 There is no public transport on Ascension, nor taxis.

13 The island's police force consists of four constables, a sergeant and an inspector, all seconded from the St Helena force for two-year tours of duty. Ascension is virtually crime-free, and is one of the fabled communities where houses remain unlocked, keys are left in cars, and children can roam in safety.

14 From an MOD perspective Ascension is officially part of the Commander British Forces South Atlantic's empire, and as such is linked firmly to the Falklands

● *Magnificent desolation... A Search and Rescue Sea King of 771 Naval Air Squadron based at HMS Gannet, Prestwick, banks over a Scottish mountainside during a training exercise*
Picture: WO1 Ian Arthur, FRPU North



Not quite so exposed on Dartmoor...

TRAINING on Dartmoor is moving under cover with the opening of a new facility to teach recruits how to operate in the field.

Trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh will use the new sheltered camp during their weekend under canvas on the moor as part of their eight-week initial training course.

Instructors will use the building to teach basic navigation training and other camping skills to the ratings from the Torpoint establishment.

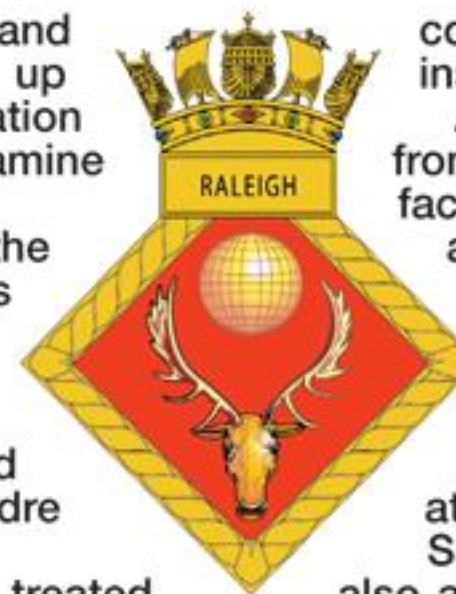
And the trainees will have somewhere dry to plan a route for their day-long 30-kilometre

(18-mile) walk and somewhere to heat up the food from their ration packs on their hexamine stoves.

The facility on the edge of the moor has been funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and was formally opened by Raleigh's CO Cdre John Keegan.

Made of solid, treated timber with a Spanish slate roof, the facility is available for use all year round.

Amenities also include a refuge with a bunk space and



cooking facilities for the instructors.

As well as the recruits from HMS Raleigh, the facilities are used by around 480 Officer Cadets from Britannia

Royal Naval College and approximately 1,500 trainee Royal

Marines from CTC RM at Lympstone each year.

Schools and colleges are also able to use the facilities when spare capacity allows.

"This is a wonderful facility where our trainees will be able to carry out training towards their apprenticeships including

the wider key skills qualifications such as working as teams," said Cdre Keegan.

"It is far superior to the shelter we had before – that offered no protection against the elements and meant that training was restricted to daylight hours."

"The quality of the facility is a great credit to all involved."

HMS Raleigh has owned the area on the edge of Dartmoor since 1986.

The Armed Forces is one of a number of organisations who benefit from LSC funding to help towards apprenticeship training for Service personnel, as part of their professional development.

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● Marine Cadet Paul Deering at the helm of HMS Charger, with LC Danielle Johnson in the background

River patrol for Tuscan

TEN Cadets and two members of staff from **Connah's Quay** unit were invited by Lt Hugo Parkinson, Commanding Officer of HMS Charger, to spend a day aboard the patrol boat.

Starting at Salford Quays in Manchester, the visitors travelled with the Archer-class vessel down the Manchester Ship Canal and into the River Mersey, going alongside at Brunswick Dock at Liverpool.

Keeping company with Charger was HMS Biter, the Manchester and Salford Universities RN Unit

boat – Charger fulfils that role for the Liverpool universities.

During their day on board the cadets took part in a number of duties, including seamanship, fire and safety procedures, docking procedures and navigation, and every cadet had a turn at the helm.

TS Tuscan now has a marine cadet detachment, and has attracted almost a dozen cadets in the first three weeks.

For more details on the Connah's Quay unit, see their website at www.tstuscan.org.uk

Anniversary yomp

A COMMEMORATIVE yomp by Marine Cadets took place in the North of England to mark the 25th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict.

Planned and carried out under the direction of Sgt John Wooller from **Sunderland Marine Cadet Detachment**.

A group of five adults and 20 cadets completed the yomp, finishing at Sunderland War Memorial, at which veterans of the conflict were present to welcome the group.



● The bridge of the Tyne is all mine: the four Jersey cadets, with Lt Ron Perchard (third from left) and Lt Cdr Paul Pitcher, Commanding Officer of HMS Tyne, on board the patrol ship

Pompey to Jersey via the Tyne

FOUR cadets from Jersey had a brief trip on board HMS Tyne, and managed to pack in a serious amount of work.

Accompanied by Lt Ron Perchard, of TS Jersey, Sea Cadets Aaron Hotten and Terry Hughes, along with Air Cadet Matthew Coote and Cdt Charles Perkins of Victoria College CCF, travelled to Portsmouth to join the ship, spending the night before at HMS Bristol.

After a tour of HMS Victory, the quartet

helped work the ropes and lines as Tyne left harbour, then threw themselves into firefighting and man overboard exercises.

One highlight was a 20-minute spin in one of the high-speed sea boats, and they then stood watches on the bridge – it is not easy steering a warship in a lumpy sea when you feel a little queasy.

Having assisted getting Tyne alongside in windy conditions in Jersey it was straight back to school...

Tormmentor back at Warsash

THE establishment of a new unit at Warsash means the wheel has come full circle at the mouth of the River Hamble.

The world-renowned Warsash Maritime Academy, part of the Southampton Solent University, stands on the site of the war-time Combined Operations base HMS Tormmentor.

And now, thanks to college director John Millican, the new Sea Cadet unit can call the Academy home – under the name TS Tormmentor.

And there to witness the first open day was octogenarian former Wren Mona Willis, who served in HMS Tormmentor as a cook then in the maintenance department.

Other guests included round-the-world yacht skipper Mike Golding, who is the new unit's patron, and David Loderick, president of TS Tormmentor.

Cadets from parent unit TS Hampshire, at Romsey, and from TS Hornet (Gosport) and TS Southampton (Southampton) attended, raising the new unit's standard for the first time under the gaze of CO Lt (SCC) Ron Cheek RNR.

The idea of forming a unit at Warsash came from Stephen Selmes, a former Sea Cadet himself and a petty officer in the RNR.

He discussed it with his former captain at HMS Wessex reservist

unit, Capt Brian Judkins RNR, and upon the captain's death, Stephen decided to press ahead in his honour.

Cycling around Warsash and talking to key people to gain support for a new unit, the breakthrough came when John Millican agreed to allow the proposed unit to base itself at the Academy.

CPO (SCC) Brian Staines has agreed to transfer from TS Hornet as an instructor, and Joanna Worthington, a retired Second Officer Wren and retired PO Wren Wendy Lilley have taken on responsibility for public relations.

The Open Day itself was deemed a success.

Many local families turned up to see what the Corps is all about, and a number logged their names as interested parties.

When Tormmentor formally opened its doors to its first recruits a total of 30 cadets presented themselves for basic training.

Eight adults have also volunteered to help as staff.

The unit trains on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7-9pm, and any boys or girls aged between ten and 18 who are interested, or any adults with a maritime background or experience of working with young people, and who would like to volunteer, should contact Ron Cheek on 023 9272 5056 or 07840 976470, or email rccheek@ms-sc.org for more information.



● The standard of new unit TS Tormmentor is raised for the first time at Warsash

Break-in hampers expanding unit

THIEVES have broken into the Whitehaven unit HQ, causing damage and stealing equipment.

CO Keith Crowe said: "We spent several hours checking our equipment inventories and have prepared a list of missing items, which includes tents, rucksacks and various other pieces of expedition equipment."

"The equipment is very new and was only purchased last year with support from the local Neighbourhood Forums."

The value of stolen items tops £600, and in addition a number of doors will have to be replaced as well as items such as filing cabinets, which were forced open.

A number of unit activities have had to be cancelled, and the unit will suffer financially.

Chairman Chas Tinkler said: "We are a registered charity and do not receive any direct funding."

"Our insurance will cover some, but not all, of the cost and we will have to spend a lot of time and effort to raise

the difference."

On a brighter note, the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Willis Metherell, attended the TS Bee annual RN inspection in one of her last official engagements.

Other guests included the Whitehaven unit's president, Rear Admiral Steve Morgan USN, BAE Systems' Astute Programme Director Rear Admiral Tim Chittenden, and members of Whitehaven RNA.

The inspection was carried out by the North West Area Officer, Lt Col Steve Wotherspoon RM, who spoke to cadets and toured TS Bee.

"TS Bee is a shining example of a well-run unit, closely integrated with and supported by its local community," said Lt Col Wotherspoon.

At the end of the inspection it was announced that Whitehaven had received formal approval to start a Marine cadet detachment – an appropriate move, given that the unit's Old New Quay HQ was originally occupied by Royals during the war.

around the units

THE FINAL ceremonial duty of POC Rebecca Gray as Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Cumbria saw her take centre stage herself.

Rebecca, of the Whitehaven unit, was thanked by the Lord Lieutenant, Col James Cropper, at his annual Reserve Forces and cadets Awards, and she received a Cumbria Police money box.

Charles Tinkler, Chairman of the unit, received the Certificate of Merit for LC Shane Kane, who was unable to attend.

THE DEVON District EL training weekend was held at Okehampton Camp, Dartmoor.

The 16 cadets trained at the camp and on the moor, and are keen to return in September to complete their courses.

S/Lt (SCC) Cole and PO (SCC) Bartlett, together with their instructors, were impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all.

TWO generous donations have enabled the Clapton and Hackney unit to replace its clapped-out minibus.

The Jack Petchy Foundation provided £10,000, and a similar donation came from closer to home – unit president Richard Hardie.

The new bus will ensure cadets can travel to competitions, events and courses.

AS REPORTED in the RNA pages of the last Navy News, Lewes unit helped Lewes branch of the RNA decommission, and accepted the branch bell for safekeeping.

Cadets Igraine Pendragon and Cassie Ham escorted the branch standard, TS Lewes CO Lt (SCC) Mark Reeves RNR sounded the Last Post and Reveille on the bugle, and CPO (SCC) Wells was parade marshal.

ROYAL Marine Cadets from the Southern Area made the most of a weekend of full-bore shooting at Bicester Garrison.

An early start on Saturday saw the 20 RM cadets and two ACF Rifle cadets raring to go.

The full day at Otmoor Ranges near Oxford allowed junior cadets to complete tests of training before joining their senior colleagues in putting some rounds down.

Sunday was another long day, with cadets assigned to two ranges, with a two-mile yomp in between.

A total of 16 shooting badges were awarded to the party, which was supported by 15 staff under Capt Agnew RMR.

CDR Colin Redstone, Area Officer (North) for the Sea Cadet Corps, has received his OBE from the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace.

Cdr Redstone was awarded the honour for his work at Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood.

MEMBERS of the Hinckley unit have paid a visit to HMS York, accompanied by the Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth, Cllr Mary Sherwin.

The cadets were shown round the ship by Lt Tom Rowley and his team.

During the visit frigate HMS Westminster, which was berthed alongside the destroyer, got under way, and as she was the senior ship due respects had to be paid.

The Still and Carry On was piped by LC Laura Hartwell.

IT WAS a home win for the Northampton and Wellingborough crews at the first stage of the annual pulling regatta.

Rowing on the River Nene adjacent to their HQ in Nunn Mills Road, the local unit swept the board in all event classes against crews representing Loughborough, Kettering, Hinckley and Leicester.

All the teams – each one of which had representation from both TS Laforey (Northampton) and TS Diamond (Wellingborough) – now go through to the Eastern Regional heat on the River Trent.

Cadets learn to paddle in the surf

SOUTHERN Area cadets had to adapt their river techniques for a more boisterous ride when they had their first taste of surf kayaking (see right).

Coached by PO Andy Pearce and Bertie Beckham of the British Canoe Union, the cadets spent a day at Saunton in North Devon learning this new skill.

There was plenty of initial dunking, but by the end of the day the youngsters had mastered the basics, and even indulged in a little free surfing.

Thanks are due to the Woodmill Outdoor Shop for providing equipment.

See www.hants.gov.uk/paddlesouth for more details.



around the units

Rye bags coveted silverware

RYE has been selected as the most improved Sea Cadet unit in the UK in 2006, and was the first recipient of the silver Indefatigable Trophy.

The trophy, once the RN Swimming Cup, is so valuable it has to remain in the old TS Indefatigable College in Anglesey. Winning units keep a shield.

The college closed in 1995 but is now a Joint Services training establishment.

The Indefatigable Old Boys Association decided to present the trophy annually to the Sea Cadet Corps and association chairman Col William O'Leary travelled from Oxford to present it to Lt (SCC) David Spicer RNR, CO of TS Rye.

Top of the pipes

THREE cadets from the Portland unit have become champions at the National Sea Cadet Piping Competition at HMS Raleigh.

LC Richard Samuel, AC Megan O'Donovan and Cadet Taryn Ingleheart beat teams from across the UK to win gold in the Team Piping event, retaining the trophy Portland won last year.

LC Samuel also won a bronze in the Individual Piping event.

Cdr Ingleheart only began to learn piping four months before the competition, and managed seventh place in her first national event.

The cadets were trained by CPO Louise Dench.

Domenic is remembered

A REDEDICATION ceremony has been held at the Sefton unit's Atlantic Memorial Garden, created to remember L/Cpl Domenic Salzano, killed during parachute training in 1995.

Domenic and his brother Ged, the former CO of 42 Cdo RM and who is now based in London, were both Sefton unit cadets.

Former staff and cadets attended, including District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Norman Wood RNR and Lt Cdr Griffiths RNR, both former Sefton COs.

Exeter are on the Run

CADETS from TS Exeter helped ensure that the Great West Run went smoothly – and the unit even fielded a team of runners.

Members arrived early to help with car-parking; MC2 Cranmer and Hoskins stayed on through the morning to ease the departures of runners and supporters at the end of the half-marathon.

Other cadets helped give out medals and certificates at the end.

A team of six junior cadets and an instructor took part in the 2.5-mile Family Fun Run.

Money raised by the team will be divided between unit funds and Honeylands, a local respite centre for children with disabilities.

Flame held by charity

MEMBERS of the Southwark unit assisted at a ceremony which saw Marie Curie Cancer Care assume responsibility for the Millennium Flame.

Politician and broadcaster Edwina Currie accepted the flame on behalf of the charity, which will pass it on after a year and a day.

The flame will be housed at City Hall in London while Marie Curie Cancer Care are the keepers.

The Millennium Flame was used by the Queen to light the National Millennium Beacon in London on December 31 1999, and again on June 3 2002 in the Mall to light the National Golden Jubilee Beacon.

The cadets were accompanied by Lt Cdr Alan Phillips.



● The annual RN Sea Scout camp at Whale Island in Portsmouth Harbour marked the Scouts' centenary year with a group photograph of 300 Scouts on the water outboard of HMS Bristol. During their week-long camp they enjoyed many activities, including sailing, kayaking, power boating and hiking, plus visits to Action Stations, HMS Victory and the Royal Marines Museum. They also had the chance to compare Sea Scouting in the past with the present – and predicted a bright future

Picture: LA(Phot) Emz Tucker (FRPU (East))

Lochaber gets its fast boat

LOCHABER unit has been awarded a grant of £8,320 from the Awards for All lottery scheme for the purchase of a fast motor boat which will enable them to train their cadets in a variety of skills.

The lottery award is the last piece in a jigsaw of funding packages from organisations which include £1,500 from HBOS, £2,868 from the Scottish Communities

Foundation and money raised by the Fort William unit itself.

Unit chairman John Fotheringham said: "We're really delighted to receive this substantial grant, which marks a major stepping stone for our unit."

"It has taken a great deal of time and effort to put this funding package together, and I would like to pay particular tribute to the work put in by our treasurer Bob Lee."

"He has done a fantastic job."

The new pride of the unit is a 5.7m Humber RIB, powered by a 40hp outboard motor.

It will be used to train cadets

in seamanship, navigation, teamworking and boat-handling skills, and will also be used as a safety boat for sailing activities.

CO Derrick Warner said: "We understand that this is the biggest grant ever awarded to the unit and we would like to say a huge 'Thank you' to everyone who has been involved in making this project a success."

"It means that we'll be able to offer a whole new set of training opportunities to both our cadets and instructors."

The unit is currently looking for adults to help run things both behind the scenes and as instructors.

"The hard work of the unit management committee has really delivered a tremendous piece of equipment which will serve us for many years to come; and this is only the first part of the story," he added.

"We are currently on the lookout for potential instructors to help us in our work."

"You don't need to be ex-Navy, or even a skilled sailor. You just need to be keen to work with young people and have a couple of hours to spare each week."

For more information, call 01397 712605 or 01397 712779, or see their website at <http://units.sea-cadets.org/lochaber/>



● Eastbourne unit raised £600 for St Dunstan's with their Cadet Challenge – pulling a field gun along the promenade (above). The Mayor of Eastbourne, Cllr Colin Belsey, set them on their way, and they completed the half-marathon distance of just over 13 miles in around five and a half hours.

Reunion looks Forward

NO BUS pass – but possibly a new home for TS Forward.

Ellesmere Port unit celebrates its 65th birthday this year, and is organising a reunion to celebrate as well as raising funds for a new HQ.

TS Forward has been at its current location for 29 years, and the HQ is showing its age.

A plot of land has been earmarked for a new unit HQ by the local council, but some £300,000 will be needed to start the process.

As well as seeking grants from bodies such as the National

Lottery, staff themselves want to do as much as possible to contribute, hence the reunion.

It is open to anyone who has ever been involved with TS Forward, such as cadets, staff, parents and management committee members.

The reunion will be at 7.30pm on Saturday August 18 at Ellesmere Port Civic Hall.

For more information or to book call 0151 355 1779 (Mondays and Thursdays 7.30pm to 9pm) or email karenciomapark@uwclub.net

Units join charity weekend

CADETS from two units in Cornwall District, City of Truro and Padstow, took part in the Tregothnan Estate charity weekend to raise money for Cornwall MSSC and other local charities.

Sea Cadets performed rigging displays while Marine Cadets gave a demonstration of patrols and hand signals.

This was followed by an attack on an 'enemy' position – the enemy in this case being Sea Cadet volunteers.

The final display had an extra member – Taylor, son of the Head Gardener at Tregothnan, celebrated his tenth birthday by slotting in with ease (he had watched the displays closely all weekend).

Members of the public tried the Marine Cadets' ration packs – some older visitors rued the demise of the bacon grill and mixed fruit pudding – and were surprised at the amount of kit stowed in the average bergen.

The units were grateful to Evelyn Boscawen for allowing them to join the annual event – the estate is only open to the public once each year.



● Members of the Kings Lynn unit soak up the sun in Bermuda

Bermudians host King's Lynn team

FOLLOWING a visit by Sea Cadets from Bermuda for the Trafalgar 200 celebrations in 2005, members of the King's Lynn unit have now made a reciprocal trip across the Atlantic.

Although guests of TS Admiral Somers, there was still a major fund-raising effort by cadets, aided by groups such as the local branch of the RNA.

As a result the cost was reduced to £350 per person, and allowed a fund for entrance fees and sundry expenses while on the island – the principle was that no one should miss out because they could not

afford something.

The cadets and staff were given a very warm welcome in Bermuda, where staff from TS Admiral Somers took time off work to chaperone them around the island.

Visits included St Catherine's Fort, the Bermuda Aquarium (where cadets had a behind-the-scenes tour), the dockyard and the Governor's house.

They also met the Mayor of St George's.

One of the memorable trips was to the Blue Hole Hill Park, which included swimming in the caves that were formerly used for dolphin shows.

The group took part in the island's Palm Sunday walk around various beauty spots, which lasted around three hours and attracted some 2,000 people.

They also managed to fit in some canoeing and sailing in warm water, and noted how odd it was to suffer vertigo whilst canoeing, as the water is so clear you could see up to 50ft down.

The staff and parents of the island unit also welcomed them into their homes for meals, BBQ's and general socialising.

The King's Lynn cadets were fine ambassadors for their unit and their home country, and it is hoped to continue with the exchange in years to come – the UK cadets have been invited back in two years to join in the island's 400th anniversary celebrations.



● Flag Officer Training and Recruiting Rear Admiral John Borley hands over to Capt Nick Davis RNR, his Director Youth and Cadets, the keys of four Fox terrier-class yachts recently made available for use both by RN Sections of the CCF and by Cadet organisations. Following a refit, the 22ft yachts will join STC Amaryllis and powered vessels Black Swan and Blue Swan for training in the Solent

Red Rose day in Lancaster

THE men and women of HMS Lancaster took advantage of the relative proximity to their namesake city to enjoy its freedom.

The frigate was in Barrow-in-Furness for the launch of HMS Astute and the town's maritime festival.

Three other RN vessels were dispatched to Cumbria to mark the birth of the hunter-killer submarine: Falklands veteran destroyer HMS Exeter plus patrol boats HMS Charger (associated with Liverpool's universities) and HMS Biter (associated with Manchester and Salford universities).

The weekend festival saw 3,500 Cumbrians visit Lancaster alone.

And with Lancaster herself unable to sail up the Lune into the city which bears her name, 150 sailors were bussed around Morecambe Bay to the Lancastrian county town.

There they fell in before the historic castle for Lancaster's Mayor Cllr Helen Helme to inspect the Colour Party and Guard, while her fellow councillors chatted with the platoons.

Cheered on by locals, the ship's company marched through the streets before entering the town hall for a civic reception (on the menu, appropriately, was Lancashire Hot Pot).

Despite being weighed down by this fine stew, 11 sailors promptly trotted out on the football pitch against local police officers – and ran out 5-2 winners.

"The parade in Lancaster was a wonderful occasion and an opportunity to enjoy the warmth and hospitality of a proud city," said CO Cdr Richard Moss.

"It capped a superb weekend in Barrow."

Where gulls daren't

FASLANE pest controller John Bellshaw hopes to give the bird to the base's gulls to stop their mating habits disrupting life at the establishment.

For most of the year man and beast get along very well on the Clyde, but during mating season the common gulls (which, despite their name, aren't common but are a protected species) become a nuisance.

Some birds nest on the ground, often in or near one of the car parks, and in protecting their nests, the gulls become rather aggressive.

Enter the bird van man. Pest controller John has been given a new van, fitted with a loudspeaker system to drive the birds away – a sort of 'scaregull', if you like.

The loudspeaker plays recordings of gull distress calls, made typically when the birds feel threatened by a predator.

By playing the tape, the hope is that the gulls will find a more suitable nesting place for their young, away from the hustle and bustle of the naval base, while sailors and staff won't have to contend with irate birds.

Campbeltown's fliers pass MoT

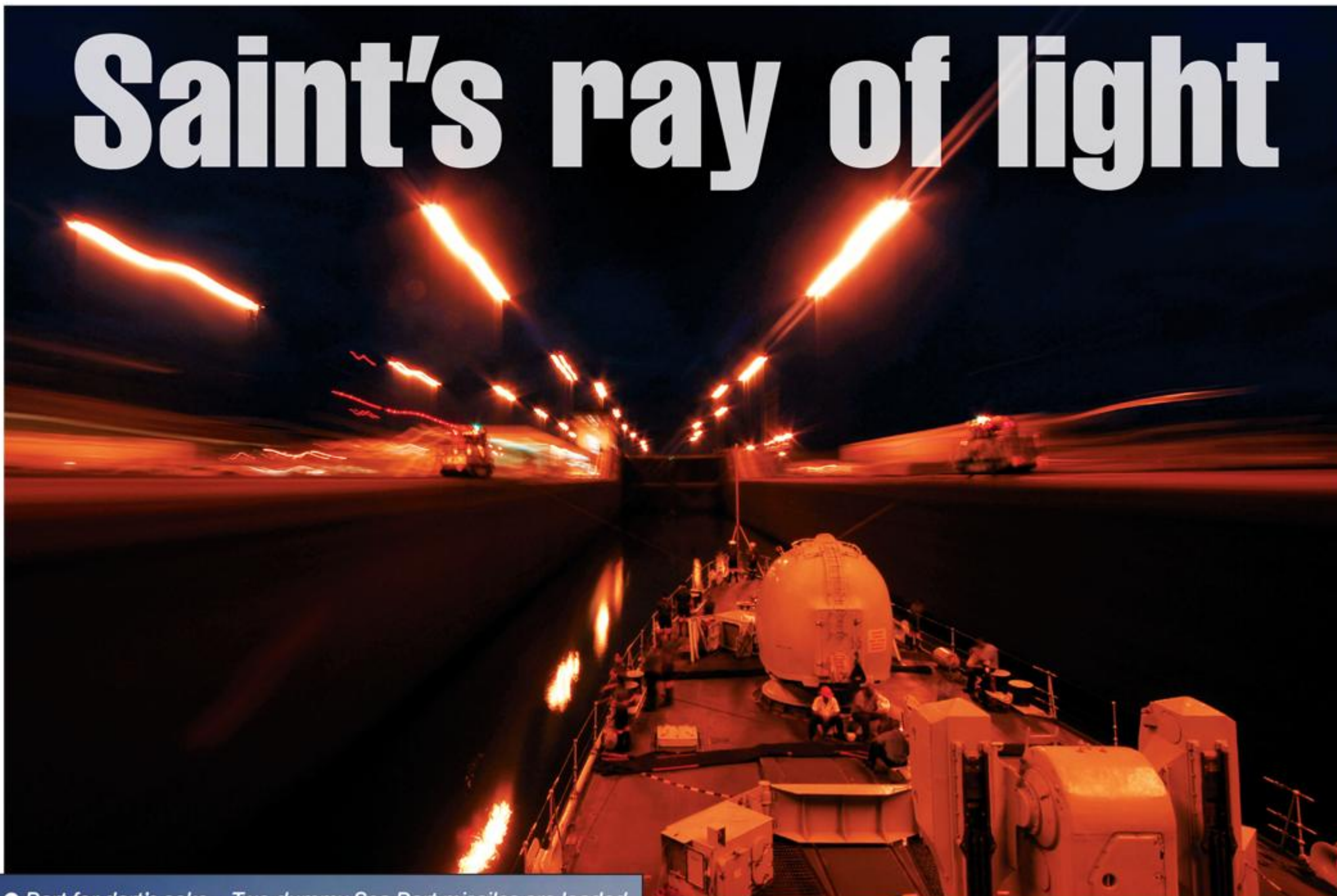
FRIGATE HMS Campbeltown has welcomed her airmen – 210 Flight – back aboard after they received the thumbs up from the Naval Flying Standards Flight, aka Trappers.

The Trappers are the Fleet Air Arm counterpart of FOST, testing each ship's flight roughly every 18 months.

210 Flight (of 815 NAS) had their documentation checked, were put through a two-hour oral examination and finally a demanding three-hour sortie over Exmoor and northern Devon.

"Although a lot of work is required for the visit by the NFSF, it's really good when you have succeeded – you know you are delivering the goods," said observer Lt Duncan Thomas.

Saint's ray of light



● Dart for dart's sake... Two dummy Sea Dart missiles are loaded on to the launcher as Southampton makes her way towards Chile and (above) despite the artistic streaks of light, the ship slowly makes her way through the Panama Canal



HMS Southampton is taking the 'long way round' as she heads to the Falklands to relieve her sister HMS Edinburgh.

The destroyer – known as The Saint – paid a lightning visit to Peru as she continued her journey through the Americas bound for the South Atlantic dependency.

Callao, the port of Peru's capital Lima, was home to the Portsmouth-based warship for just 48 hours.

So there was a lot to squeeze in: an official reception for dignitaries and Peruvian naval leaders, a press conference for the Peruvian media and, most heartwarming, a party for youngsters from La Casa la Panchita children's organisation.

And after all that, there was still time for the sailors to pay their respects to Admiral Miguel Maria Grau Seminario – Peru's equivalent to Nelson, a 19th-Century naval hero – who is honoured by an imposing and gleaming column overlooking the Pacific.

Upon leaving Callao, Southampton worked with two Peruvian warships, frigate BAP Palacios and submarine BAP Pisagua.

Then it was south to meet an old friend in Chile, HMS Sheffield

– now Almirante Williams.

The Type 42 was joined for her journey to the Chilean port of Mejillones by the French frigate FS Prairail for two days of exercises from jackstay transfers to combined gunnery mission.

The two ships were joining a much larger international task group, including vessels from the USA, Chile and Argentina for a major exercise as *Navy News* was printed.

The deployment has also seen the Saint pass through the Panama Canal for the first time in her quarter-century life.

Although her passage of the man-made waterway occurred by night, numerous crew stayed up to witness the occasion.

How much the POs' mess saw of the canal is questionable, however.

They were in action on the flight deck, rowing the 48 miles of the canal while Southampton transited. In accomplishing the feat, they raised £2,500 for the ship's charities.

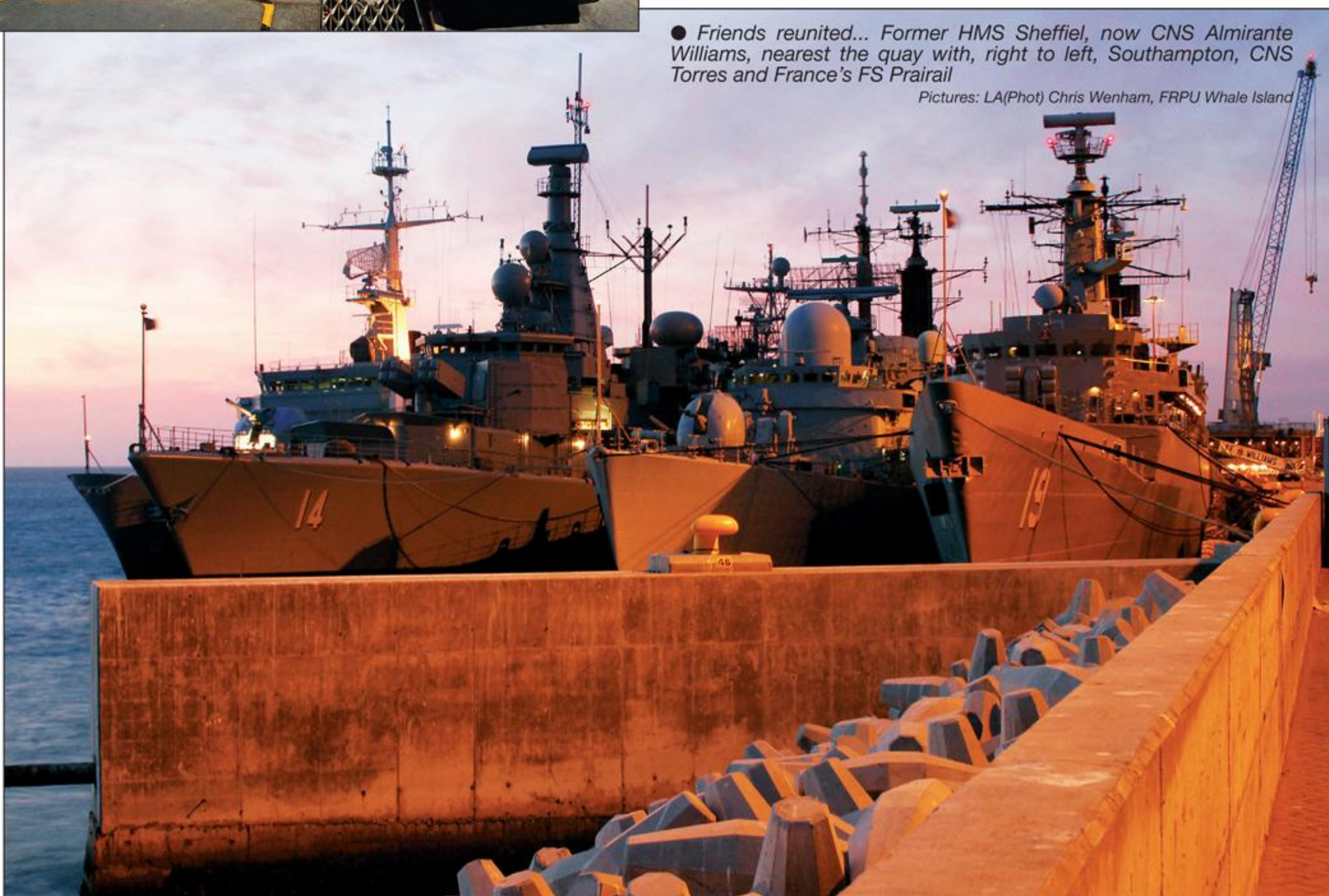
Before entering the canal, the Saint sampled the delights of Barbados.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer is a quarter of the way through her deployment. She won't see the Solent again until Christmas.



● Friends reunited... Former HMS Sheffield, now CNS Almirante Williams, nearest the quay with, right to left, Southampton, CNS Torres and France's FS Prairail

Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Wenham, FRPU Whale Island



Blyth wakens a sleeping minnow

AFTER a demanding six months in the Gulf, the sailors of HMS Blyth returned to sunny Faslane (they assure us it was) to bring HMS Penzance back to life.

The ship's companies of the two Sandown-class vessels have traded places (as have the crews of sister vessels Pembroke and Ramsey as part of the Aintree deployment to keep the hulls themselves in the Middle East for up to three years).

So after a fortnight's well-deserved leave, the Blyth sailors arrived at HM Naval Base Clyde where a dormant Penzance was waiting for them.

It took four days for the minehunting sailors to get used to their new surroundings; despite being sisters, Blyth and Penzance do possess some kit which is different.

Once acquainted, the sailors took Penzance to sea under the watchful gaze of FOST staff.

"Taking over a ship en masse is especially challenging for the engineering teams," said CO Lt Cdr John Craig.

"They need to understand the intricacies of the ship's machinery to make sure that it's available when required."

"There are little differences between the Sandowns which give each ship its own unique character."

"Personally, I find the biggest challenge is not saying: 'Good morning, Captain, HMS Blyth' when I answer the phone."

The ship has just hosted minewarfare students for a week's training and is now in Scottish waters conducting survey work around some of the country's largest oil terminals.

Avon call for Quorn

YOU wait all year for a Royal Navy warship to visit and then two come all at once.

Hot on the heels of HMS Cattistock's visit to Bristol, her sister HMS Quorn also found herself in the heart of the great city on the Avon.

Cattistock headed to Bristol to champion the Royal Navy's suppression of the slave trade two centuries before.

History was also on the minds of the Quorn's sailors, but the rather nearer past of the Falklands.

The minehunter's visit to Bristol coincided with the city's Service of Commemoration for the Falklands task force.

Her sailors lined up alongside more than 650 men and women from the RAF and Army, plus numerous West Country veterans of the 1982 conflict, in the city's cathedral.

The Falklands commemorations continued after the Portsmouth-based warship departed Bristol, too.

Quorn's next stop was Poole Harbour, where 1 Assault Group Royal Marines paid tribute to the green berets' sacrifices 25 years ago.

A platoon of sailors joined the Royals on a march through the town and along Town Quay, while their shipmates manned ship.

Before departing the Dorset port, Quorn collected the Mayor of Melton, Cllr Pamela Posnett, 20 Sea Cadets and staff from the ship's affiliated units TS Tiger and Venomous, plus nine-year-old Zoe Riley, winner of a schools' competition, for a trip up the Solent into her home port, via the Needles Channel.

"It was a great pleasure to be on board Quorn – not because I got a day off school but because it gave me an idea of what life at sea is like for when I hopefully join the Navy," said Cadet Hannah Thompson from Loughborough.

Quorn's CO Lt Cdr Mark Taylor added: "We hope that through days like this we can bring HMS Quorn – and the Royal Navy – very much into the hearts and minds of the inland community of Melton."

Keeping an eye on Captain Bligh

More than just a hat...

THE title isn't a joke. Christian Lamb, who put together this very jolly book of Wrens' stories from the WW2 - I Only Joined for the Hat (*Bene Factum*, £9.99 ISBN 978-1-903071-15-1) really did choose the service for its splendid tricorn hat.

But the rather self-deprecating title sums up these women and the modest way they approached their war work. No matter what skills they acquired (some ended up training submariners on the Persher course, for instance) or how crucial their jobs to the country's ultimate victory, there is very little sense of self-importance.

Of course, expectations then were different; women were not brought up to boast about their careers. Most only wanted to "do their bit," whatever it entailed, and free a man for the Fleet.

All the same, many took on highly-challenging and difficult jobs, the most famous of course being the Bletchley Park women, whom Churchill famously called the geese who laid the golden egg without a cackle.

On that note, one can't help but smile at Daphne Baker's remark. A Wren who worked in intelligence, she recalls how off-putting she found pompous (male) naval officers at parties who would say grandly: "Don't ask me what I do."

What shines through this collection of memories and letters is the redoubtable spirit of these women, who braved all sorts of hardships with the greatest of good humour.

Many found themselves mixing with women from completely different backgrounds for the first time in their lives. The author was an admiral's daughter, and entered the Service with the help of a good reference from a colonel who played bridge with her grandmother.

Jane Fawcett, who was 19, had come to Bletchley from Sadler's Wells, where she trained as a ballet dancer under Ninette de Valois; Joy Hale, a particularly bright grammar school girl, applied herself to her Morse code and exams and became a CPO at the age of 20.

Most of the contributors are now in the late 80s and Lamb writes how bereft she felt when she tried to contact some of them, only to find they had died.

The Grove Review

THANKS to Charles Laughton and Hollywood, and despite the much better, more recent feature film about the Mutiny on the Bounty, Vice Admiral of the Blue William Bligh is still thought of nowadays as the model of the tyrannical officer of the old, cruel Royal Navy.

The attempts begun by the family of Fletcher Christian to blacken Bligh's name have generally been more successful than those of less-biased historians who proclaim Bligh's many virtues, writes Dr Eric Grove, Professor of Naval History at Salford University.

Another attempt to set the record straight is the belated publication (after 210 years!) of a first-hand account of Bligh's second, more successful, voyage to Tahiti to carry breadfruit to Jamaica to feed the slaves.

Captain Bligh's Second Chance (Chatham, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-86176-280-1) took place in 1791-93 and involved a new Blackwall-built West Indianman commissioned as HMS Providence accompanied by a brig, appropriately named Assistant.

Bligh, who had only been a lieutenant in Bounty, was now a full captain and the Admiralty, leaning the lesson of the previous fiasco, gave him a proper crew with three lieutenants, the third of which was George Tobin.

Tobin wrote down his experiences which he put together as a memoir while at sea a few years later, ostensibly for his brother James, but with wider publication in mind.

It never appeared in its author's lifetime but has now been produced by Chatham in an attractive edition, sympathetically and intelligently edited by

Professor Roy Schreiber, one of Bligh's modern biographers.

The text is illustrated by original drawings by Tobin, who, like many officers of his generation, was a competent artist.

Lt Tobin, in his first ship in his new rank to which he was promoted in 1790, comes over as an observant, thoughtful and pleasant young man with an eye for detail in his observations of the places Bligh's expedition visited.

Having picked up a party of Marines at Sheerness (a prudent security measure given earlier events) Providence and her consort sailed from Spithead on August 2 1791.

Stopping at the Canaries to stock up with wine, the two ships were at Cape Town (still owned by the Dutch) by November from where they sailed eastwards across the Indian Ocean to Tasmania which they reached in late February.

The ships arrived at Tahiti in April where they were given a very warm welcome by the locals.

Tobin clearly liked the people of Tahiti, whose society was only in the early stages of being destroyed by contacts with the west.

The entire ship's company was individually adopted by Tahitians, most of the sailors pairing off with local women whose society found this perfectly acceptable, indeed desirable.

Laden with 780 large pots of breadfruit, as well as 301 small pots, 35 tubs and 26 boxes of the same, as well as many other local plants of possible economic or just botanical interest Providence and

Assistant reluctantly sailed off westwards in the middle of July.

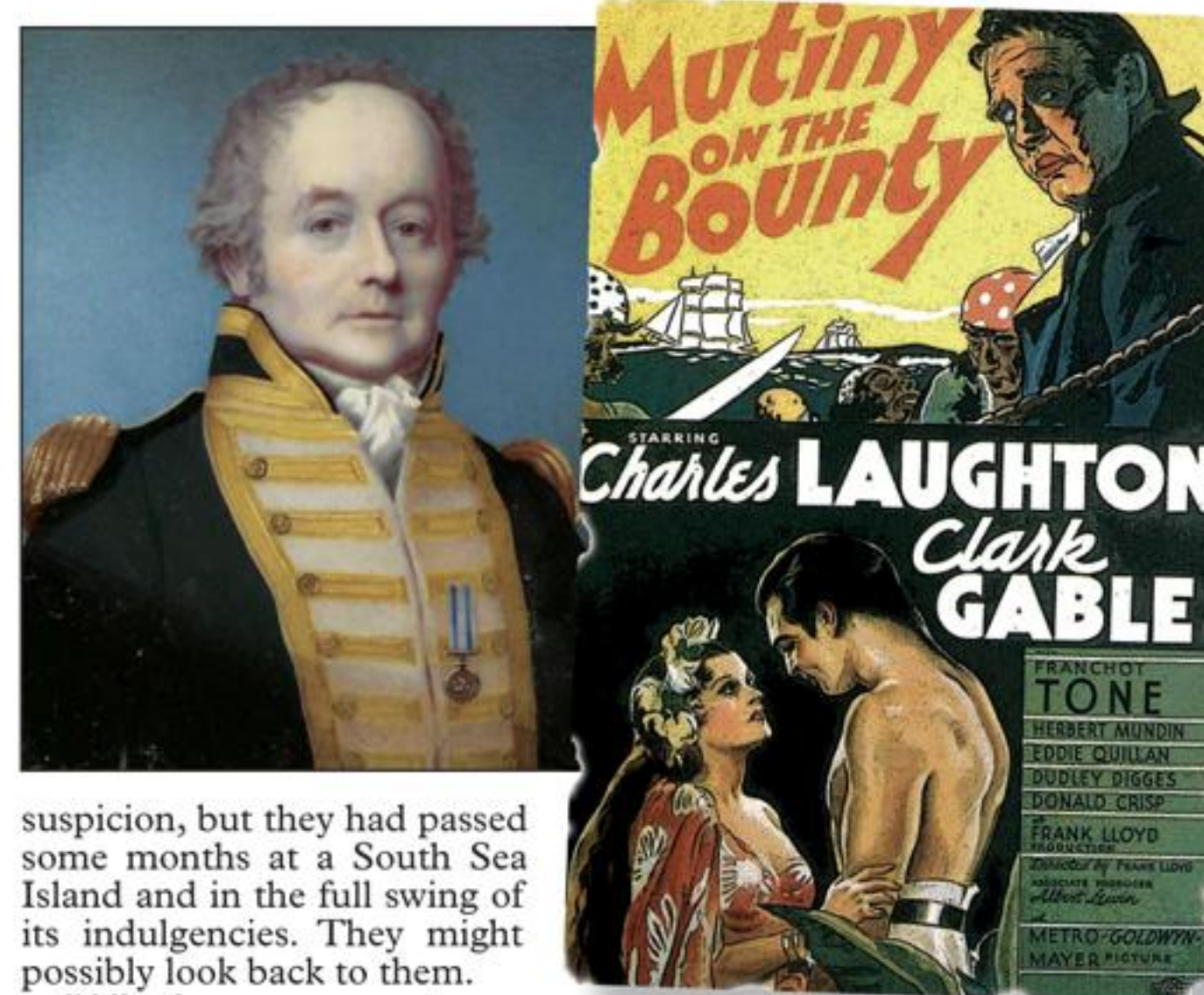
They were fully laden with presents and provisions and there was genuine sadness on both sides at the parting. Bligh had an excellent relationship with the King Regent Pomare and his court, who all spent a last night on board HMS Providence.

As Tobin put it: "The parting between Captain Bligh and his friends was kind and affectionate. They separated in the heart-felt conviction of having no want of harmony and good will to reproach themselves with."

Having taken the royal family ashore, Tobin was again plied with final presents. "Captain Bligh was anxiously waiting our return, which made my farewell interview with these happy islanders, but short, yet it was so distressing a one, I was glad to hurry from the scene."

The local leaders had reason to be kind to their British visitors. During his farewell Pomare managed to procure another musket from his friend Bligh to add to his small but significant armoury. Within a few years these would help make him master of Tahiti and most of the islands nearby.

On the way home it was clear that the lesson of the Bounty had been learned. As Tobin put it: "Shortly after quitting Tahiti, a warrant officer was added to each watch, and, as well as for reefs and shoals, a vigilant eye was kept upon the crew. Not that their conduct created any particular degree of



suspicion, but they had passed some months at a South Sea Island and in the full swing of its indulgencies. They might possibly look back to them.

"All however went on right in the Providence, nor could any crew, as well as that of her Assistant, have conducted themselves better throughout the whole expedition."

Tobin says not a word against Bligh, whom he compliments as being "so prompt at every kind of nautic science".

He even glosses over Bligh's disapproval of an incident in the Torres Straits where Tobin used musketry to drive off local canoes who were acting in a most threatening manner to the cutter under his command.

A few days later Assistant was attacked and one man killed and another injured by arrows. Tobin felt vindicated that this incident had "brought a thorough conviction" to Bligh's mind "of the truly desperate people he had to deal with in these straits and of his good fortune in no loss having attended the boats while distantly exploring a channel, on which hazardous service they were so long employed."

● The image of Bligh which has bedevilled historians... A poster for the 1930s Hollywood depiction of the infamous captain and (above left) a portrait of the then admiral in later life

The generous Tobin seems to have recognised, as some others did not, that Bligh's hot temper and remarkable command of the English language were far from being the whole story of a complex and highly-able sea officer.

The life that Tobin recounts of generally good food and drink, remarkable health for the period and travel to exotic places with a highly accommodating population makes life in the late 18th Century seem almost idyllic, especially when compared with that found in that period ashore.

The book is another nail in the coffin of the old 'black legend' of poor food and harsh discipline - and under Captain Bligh too!

The A to Z of the sea from BC to AD

EASILY the largest book to ever land upon the desks of the Navy News team and, excepting *Jane's Fighting Ships*, the most expensive, The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History (Oxford University Press, £270 ISBN 978-0-19-513075-1) is a paean to the sea through the ages.

Its 900-plus entries over nearly 3,000 pages spread across four volumes make it a magisterial work, with the world's leading naval and maritime experts submitting articles on the A to Z of the sea from Actium to Zheng He (a 15th-Century Chinese navigator if you were wondering - Ed).

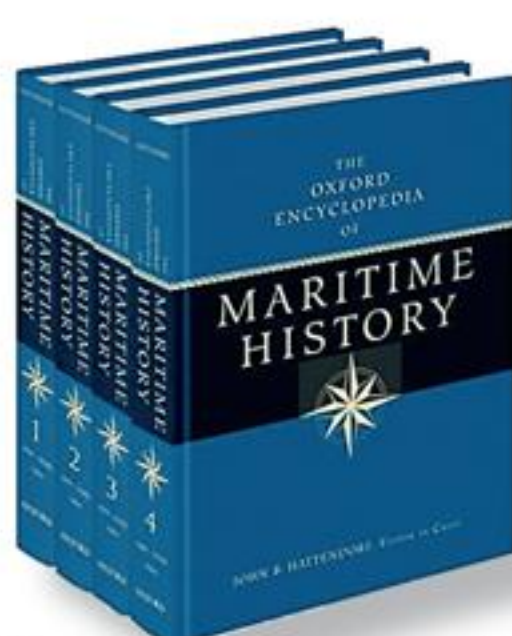
We'll start in the obvious place: Royal Navy. No entry! Ah, *Navies: Great Powers: British Isles, 1500 to the Present*. That's better. Still, condensing five centuries of British naval history into eight pages might seem a tad uncharitable (especially as the Germans get seven pages and they've only 'been at it' since 1848).

We shouldn't, of course, be solely interested in the Senior Service. And that's the beauty of this encyclopedia which is, erm, as encyclopaedic as you could possibly hope for. The eclectic subject matter is admirable: yacht construction, explorers, music, maps, canals, security.

It would be wrong, however, to use the adjective 'definitive'. There is no entry for Jellicoe. Nor Beatty. There is for Nelson (phew - Ed). There is also for Chester Nimitz, architect of the US naval victory in the Pacific and, perhaps more surprisingly, 'Bull' Halsey.

Do not let it be thought, however, that this is American-centric, for it is not. Of WW2-era leaders, Mountbatten, Cunningham and Dönitz are all included; strangely omitted are Raeder and Ramsay.

Yet this is much more than a collection of admirals'



biographies.

John Constable, for example, the legendary artist, is included, so too J M W Turner, for their contribution to maritime art (but there's no place for Wyllie, oddly).

Art, or rather culture, is a prominent feature of this work; for the social and cultural importance the sea plays in our daily lives is often overlooked. Maritime fiction is a positive boom industry with a clutch of authors such as Julian Stockwin, Patrick O'Brian, Douglas Reeman and others widely read (and, as the entry on the naval novel in this encyclopaedia shows, there are scores more).

Obviously, our own publication has yet to make the grade, for you will not find it listed among the more important nautical journals produced in the UK...

But such are the vagaries of compiling encyclopaedias. The editor-in-chief, respected author and professor John Hattendorf, has managed an unenviable task of selecting those 900 or so entries which were worthy of inclusion.

Indeed, pick any page here and there is something to grab the attention (the book is lavishly illustrated with photographs, engravings and charts). As with all good encyclopaedias, once you start delving it is devilishly difficult to stop.

Oliver Twist-like, encyclopaedias - like general histories - always leave you wanting more. The Oxford Encyclopedia cannot offer more, but it can point you in that direction with suggestions for further reading on a myriad of subjects in a myriad of locations (journals, books, the internet) by a myriad of authors.

The price tag will, of course, make many people balk. For the true nautical buff, however, this is an indispensable reference work.

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Tour of force from Plymouth Command

PLYMOUTH Command's men's **hockey** and ladies' **netball** sides headed half-way around the world for a tour of Australia.

The Royal Australian Navy hosted both teams at HMAS Penguin, fortuitously situated just 200 yards from a superb beach and not far from Manly.

The men – the Warriors – were soon in action against Easts, one of the local premiership hockey sides.

Despite the best efforts of the exceedingly vocal cheerleading squad (also known as the netball team...) jet-lag was still evident and sadly the side lost 3-1.

The next two games were against the New South Wales Combined Services squad, which provided a stern test.

The first match, played at Burwood on the Olympic No.2 pitch, ended with a 3-1 win for the touring side and a very impressive black eye for Cdr Heber Ackland.

The second clash was a very hard-fought affair played at Sydney's Olympic Stadium. This saw the Warriors triumphant with a 3-2 victory, despite twice falling behind.

Once again they lost the injury war, however, with OM Nurse needing five stitches on his forehead.

The hockey team's fourth match saw them pitted against NSW U21 XI, who boasted five Australian U21 internationals (two of whom have since been selected to tour Europe with the full Australian squad).

Despite a barrage of attacks, the inexperienced Plymouth starting line-up heroically managed to keep the home side out for 15 minutes before conceding a barrage of goals at the end of the period.

The second half was more evenly matched with the Aussies edging it 2-1.

The final game was unfortunately cancelled by the Australians at short notice, so the balance sheet for the Warriors showed two matches won and two lost.

The netball ladies started their tour against very strong opposition from one of the local sides.

Despite valiant efforts the ladies sadly lost quite heavily against a team who were considerably taller and who had obviously played regularly together.

In the next game against an RAN side, the Brits proved they were ready for the challenge and stepped off the court with a good win.

They were not as lucky with their third clash against NSWIS.

They were forced to fight hard for possession before eventually losing the clash.

The fourth clash of the tour saw the PT staff of HMAS Kuttubul demonstrate their netball prowess and use their height advantage to great effect.

This was followed by a challenge from the Warrior men.

Disappointed by the cancellation of their final hockey match, they decided that they had seen enough netball to have a go.

While they learned quickly and showed that there were similarities with basketball, ultimately the ladies had the advantage.

Being in Sydney for 12 days, there was time for other activities and the team experienced the harbour at high speed in a jet boat and climbed to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge.

A trip to the Blue Mountains and the Jenolan Caves provided less strenuous days out, although the final day of the tour was spent whitewater rafting on the Olympic canoe course.



● The Royals (in white) and the red berets challenge for the ball in the Parachute Regiment's box during a set-piece in the 2-2 draw at Exeter's Sandy Park

Picture: LA(Phot) Jenny Burn

From the Falklands to the town of JR

PERHAPS fittingly in this 25th anniversary year of the Falklands conflict honours were even in the football contest between the green and red berets which shares the war's name.

A 2,000-strong crowd turned up at Sandy Park Stadium, home of Exeter Chiefs RUFC, to see an enthralling match – and some fine pre-match and half-time entertainment.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Lympstone welcomed the two challengers on to the pitch to the Gladiator theme. And then the combatants locked horns in a fizzing first half.

The Royals had a goal disallowed in the opening minutes, but that did not deter them as they kept the Paras on the back foot, dominating the first quarter.

That dominance paid off with two strikes from Dan Boere and Richie Hope... strikes which roused the red berets and prompted a change of tactics. The switch unsettled the Royals, who conceded numerous free kicks before Para pressure paid off and Tony Fitzpatrick netted to reduce the marines' half-time advantage to 2-1.

After entertainment during the break provided by the RM Commando Display Team, the two teams trotted out for the second 45 minutes pretty confident that the next goal would decide the contest one way or the other.

The result was some pretty dogged play for much of the second half, finally broken by paratrooper Ian McManus who sent the maroon section of the crowd wild with his equalizer.

Both teams pressed for a winner, but neither could deliver the knockout punch and so the clash ended 2-2 – "a fitting result for an outstanding game," said Sgt Ian Michelsen of the RM FA – with no-one holding the

Falklands Cup outright.

Meanwhile, in a country far, far away, some of the youngest footballers in the RN talent pool headed to Texas for the world's leading youth 'soccer' tournament.

This year's contest, the 28th, saw the greatest number of competitors to date drawn from all over the football world with such great names as Chelsea, Real Madrid and Eintracht Frankfurt all in the hat.

The RN U18 team have been ever-present in Dallas since the competitions founding and the 2007 event, like its predecessors, is one the teenagers will never forget.

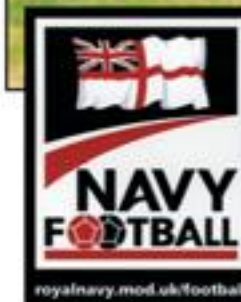
The squad had prepared well for the competition, particularly since the turn of the year with comfortable victories against London and the AFA in the Home Counties League and held on to the Inter-Services Youth Cup against the Army at Aldershot (one of our sides had to beat the old enemy...).

The team headed across the Atlantic in buoyant mood aided by a valuable coaching session with Steve Rutter (FA Coaching National Co-ordinator) and Pompey goalkeeping legend Alan Knight before departing the United Kingdom.

On arrival in Dallas, the squad were met by a wonderful set of people who volunteer to host the players and staff throughout the contest and inevitably end up being surrogate parents – not to mention passionate Navy fans.

The group stage of the tournament began with a tough tie against Takigawa Dai Nai from Kobe, Japan, and the RN came away with a deserved 2-2 draw thanks to goals from AB Hawke (Raleigh) and ET Gunnery (Collingwood), although arguably the Brits should have taken all three points.

Despite the lengthy preparations, the pace of the game and the harsh climate had its effect on the team



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

– imagine playing mid afternoon in August in this country against players faster and fitter than you are at one of the biggest football occasions of your life and you can probably guess what is going through the mind of a 17-year-old sailor.

The second game, against a strong team from Houston, resulted in a 2-0 defeat and left the RN with a huge mountain to climb if they were to qualify beyond the group stages.

It is to the enormous credit of the team that they battled valiantly in the final group match against a highly-rated Milwaukee team and went down 1-0, having tested the woodwork several times.

The sailors played a friendly

against a team from Boise, Idaho, as is the tradition in the Dallas Cup for teams that do not progress before hanging up the boots.

The remainder of the tour saw the team take in the sights and sounds of the US with a particularly memorable trip to the rodeo.

The players also witnessed some outstanding football in the latter stages of the contest with Sao Paulo of Brazil finally beating Chelsea in the U19 Super Group final.

The squad returned to the UK to re-join their respective units after two weeks together – all the better for their experience, both as players and as young adults.

It would be difficult to pick out a

● The RN U18 side on the attack against Japan's Takigawa Dai Nai in the opening match of the Dallas Cup

particular highlight from this year's tour although the opportunity to renew old friendships and make new acquaintances continues to be a high point for both players and staff alike.

A healthy proportion of the 2007 squad will be young enough to return to Dallas next year, if selected, and will no doubt benefit from this year's experience.

Trials for the 2008 RN Youth Squad will begin early next season; players eligible for the Dallas Cup XXIV should be born after August 1 1988. Recommendations of suitable RN/RM players to the RNFA Office at HMS Temeraire.

■ **ONSIDE** will be taking a break for a couple of months until the football season resumes.

Maroons mauled in birthday clash

Sharks bite on debut in Benidorm

THE BLUES marked the tenth birthday of **Rugby League** under the White Ensign with a comprehensive victory over the green berets in the inaugural RN-RM clash.

The sailors walked out against the Maroons of the Corps on a baking-hot evening at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth, writes *RNRL spokesman WO Keith Humpleby*.

Although match referee Steve Davis was no stranger to RNRL, he knew he would have his hands full in this potentially fiery encounter and to his credit he handled the game adeptly, dealing with the few flashpoints well and allowing the game to flow whenever possible.

The first half was a physical affair with both sides eager to get on top and boss the game.

Scoring was tit-for-tat throughout the 40 minutes with the marines taking advantage of a couple of handling errors to score under the posts, allowing Jamie Goss relatively easy conversions.

The pick of the Royals' tries was the last of the half when a promising move by the Navy down the left was halted by an interception and 60-metre sprint to the line by centre Geraint Kettley.

For the Navy a try from 'Jack' Lemmon opened the scoring and the half was rounded off with two scores for Matthew Murray who was clearly enjoying being back in the thick of the action.

While the RM made the most of the Navy's errors, the Navy pack was in charge in centre field, Lewis Taylor and Gareth Sharpe especially. And the trusted boots of Scott Partis were on hand with four goals during the half to give the RN a 24-18 advantage at the break.

The Royals opened the second period strongly, pressing for the equalizing score.

After being held up over the line at the first attempt the Corps were awarded a penalty and elected to run the ball instead of taking a relatively-easy two points.

The decision was rewarded when influential second row Carl Gilson forced his way over under the posts and with the resulting conversion the scores were evened up at 24-24.

After a particularly physical few minutes Partis took the steam out of the situation by slotting over a towering drop goal to nose the Navy ahead.

The marines were now finding it increasingly difficult to get any meaningful possession and the Navy took full advantage initially with a well-deserved try for prop Lewis Taylor again converted by Partis.

This opened the gates for the Navy side and the Blues began to find more gaps especially down the right hand channel.

Tries from Dane Smallbone, Partis and two from winger Marc Warren late on sealed the victory with Partis adding a further five goals to his first half tally.

The full-time score of 55-24 in the RN's favour did not truly reflect the effort put in by the Marines squad some of whom had hardly had any team coaching sessions ahead of the game.

The pitches at Temeraire have received a pounding from the RNRL lads this summer, with Pompey also hosting the annual Inter Unit 9s competition with 100 players and seven teams converging on the Solent for the event.

The Corps was represented by a squad from the RM School Of Music in Portsmouth, who were



● No way through – this time... Marc Warren tries to barge his past the RM line during the RN's comprehensive triumph

Pictures: LA(Phot) Emz Tucker, FRPU Whale Island

relatively inexperienced in RL and were drawn in the same group as last year's winners HMS Sultan and a team from HMS Raleigh coached by RNRL head coach Wayne Okell.

The RMSM were comfortably beaten by the more experienced sides but were not lacking in fitness or enthusiasm and hopefully will field a team in next year's competition.

It was generally thought that the final would be contested by Sultan and Nelson but this was not the case as the team from HMS York, led by RNRL vice captain Danny Johnson, turned out to be the dark horses of the competition joining Raleigh, Sultan and Nelson in the semi finals.

Ahead of the semis, the plate competition was completed with HMS Heron beating HMS Nottingham and the RMSM to claim the trophy.

The first semi produced arguably the biggest shock of the day as Sultan went down narrowly to Johnson's HMS York side.

The game was a thriller and was only decided by a missed conversion with both sides scoring three tries apiece.

The second semi saw Raleigh lock horns with the other pre-tournament favourites, HMS Nelson, in another enthralling match which saw the Portsmouth side take the honours.

The final was a tight match with no scores recorded to either side at the half time break.

Nelson started the second period by far the stronger side and deservedly bagged two tries.

With time running out, York struck back, thanks to a 40-metre solo break from Johnson which meant that Nelson could not relax until the final whistle.

Sultan salvaged some pride by beating Raleigh in the third-place play-off match.

RN and CS Rugby League President Rear Admiral Chris Parry presented the prizes to the victorious Nelson squad, and to runners-up York, as well as the player of the tournament trophy

to York's skipper Johnson.

The match to watch this month is the CS clash against Australian Students which will be hosted by RAF Uxbridge on Tuesday July 3, kick-off 7.30pm.



● True grit... Grim determination is etched on the faces of both players during the Inter-Unit 9s contest

THE RN Sharks Rugby 7s made their debut appearance in the Benidorm 7s Tournament, writes *WO1 Don Shaw, team manager*.

The Benidorm 7s is a very-well-run and popular event on the 7s circuit, hosted by La Villa Rugby Club in their beautiful new stadium in Villajoyosa, five miles outside Benidorm.

The Sharks were honoured to be invited to compete in the International Selections Tournament.

Teams from all over the world competed including Stellenbosch University Rugby Football Club – the second-oldest rugby club in South Africa – who boast 1,200 registered players and have produced 164 Springboks, including 15 captains down the years. Other competitors included defending champions Welsh Wizards, who counted many Welsh and English premier players in the ranks.

The Sharks found themselves drawn in the strongest group and unfortunately lost to Stellenbosch, who eventually won the tournament, in their first game.

The South African unit were very fit, fast and slick and went on to take the title with little opposition.

It was a bit of a shock for the Sharks to come up against such strong opposition in their first competitive game of the season.

Under the watchful eye of coach CPO(PT) Billy May the Sharks raised themselves and went on to win the next two matches, beating Spain's Viator Barbarians 28-7 thanks to three tries from S/Lt Adam Dean and one from Mne Carl Saunders 1.

Next up were Seleccion Moldavia, dispatched by the Sharks 21-7, with a pair of tries from Saunders and one from Mne Rob Lloyd, courtesy of an audacious side-step.

Unfortunately the hard ground and fierce competitiveness of the first three matches knocked a bit of the wind out of the Sharks' sails and by the second day the injury list was growing.

The draw saw the Sharks face the Welsh Wizards, who proved too strong for their RNRM opponents, running out 27-5 victors; the highlight, however, was an excellent try from AB Dave Roberts, sent into space by a skilful pass from Mne Gaz Fear.

All in all, a very successful showing for the Sharks in their first outing of the season and another first in the Benidorm 7s. They left with our heads held high... and the promise of another invite next year.

■ HMS Cornwall made a short stop in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, giving its rugby team the chance to turn out against the DHL Khobar Quins.

The ten-a-side game was played at 7pm under floodlights, with high humidity and temperatures over 30°C.

The players displayed enormous commitment and stamina to withstand the overbearing conditions.

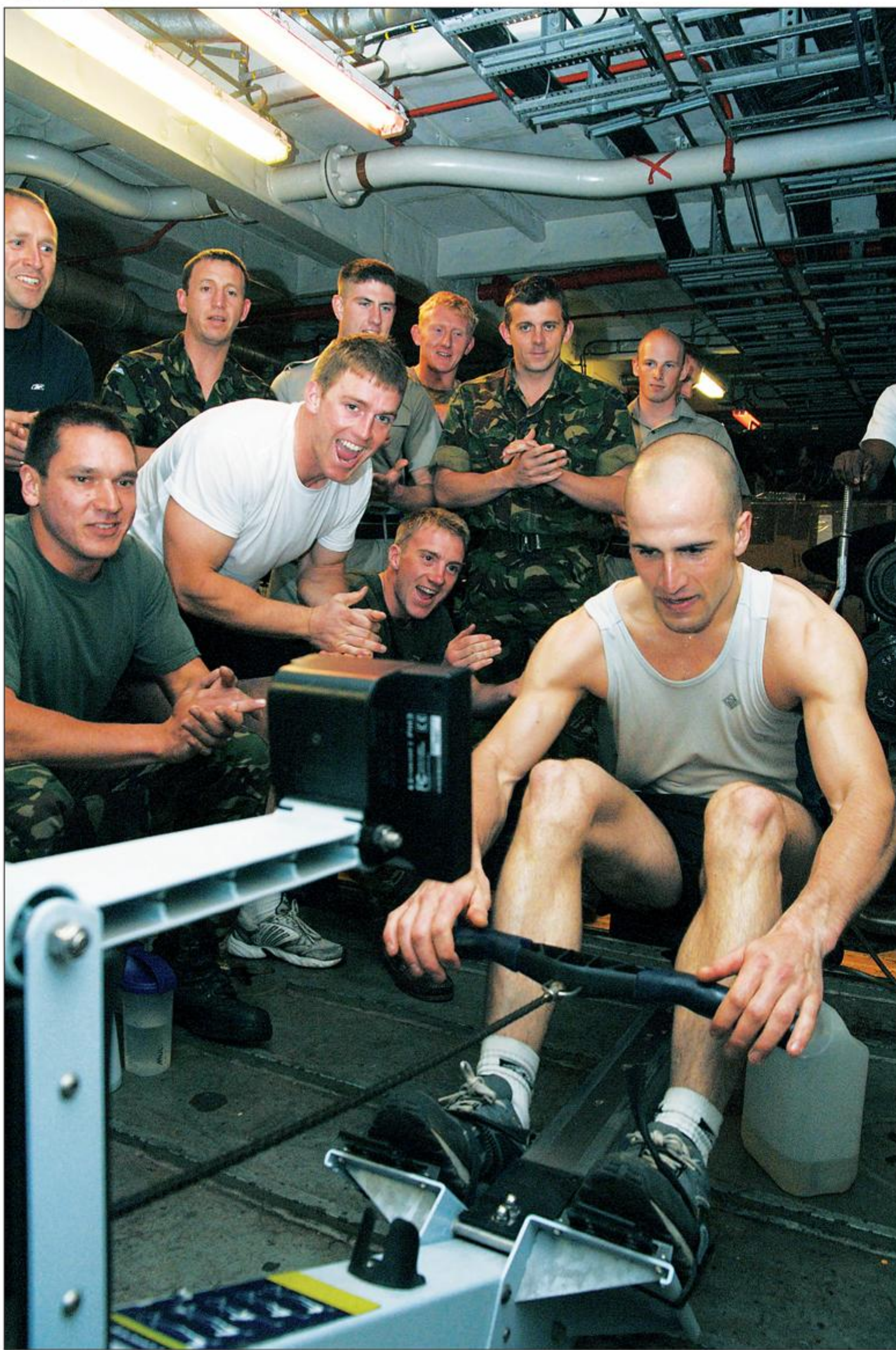
A very vocal crowd of some 60 supporters were at hand to shout encouragement and occasionally disapproving banter at the players.

Khobar were missing a number of players and could only field a team of mostly over 35-year-olds.

Two of the mainstays of the team are also RN serving members (Lt Cdr Mike Loane and WO1 Tony Mulrain who work in Jubail Naval Base as part of a small Naval contingent supporting the Royal Saudi Naval Force minehunter fleet).

HMS Cornwall's team consisted of a mixture of young and 'not so young', but the opportunity was there for 'rolling substitutes', ensuring that everyone could take to the park.

Age and experience prevailed over youth in the end, with DHL running out 60-28 winners.



Vince and Brian at the double

TWO world records have fallen to Royal Navy sportsmen – and both demanded great feats (and feet) of endurance.

Cdr Brian Meakin has entered the *Guinness Book of Records* by running ten marathons on ten consecutive days.

Each morning at 10am (appropriately) he set off on the course of Brathay Windermere marathon in the Lake District, a solitary figure pounding the Cumbrian roads, until day ten when he was joined by 1,500 other runners for the race proper.

Brian averaged 3h 55m around the course; he posted his fastest time on day ten, 3h 36m.

And as he crossed the finishing line he nudged out the previous record, set by world-famous explorer and adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes who ran seven marathons in seven days.

Running a marathon is challenging enough. Running ten marathons – 262 miles or 421 kilometres, the distance roughly from Plymouth to Nottingham or Pompey to York – is a huge challenge, especially as the Brathay Windermere is recognised as one of the toughest races in the UK.

"I would normally expect to run a marathon in about 3h 15m, so slowing this pace by half an hour or so seemed a sensible approach," said Brian who works on the Future Carrier IPT team.

"I ran in the London marathon in April as part of my training and only managed to beat four hours by a couple of minutes.

"I was absolutely shattered after finishing but still managed to go out the next day and run 23 miles, which was a great psychological boost."



● Cdr Brian Meakin rests his weary legs in a Cumbrian lake during his marathon world record attempt

As for the ten-day challenge... "After the initial shock of the first couple of runs, 'groundhog day' set in," Brian explained.

"This would comprise of breakfast, a stretching session and pre-run massage; run the marathon and then into the river to cool off the legs; after another massage and stretch it would be time to carb-load and finally another stretching session before an 8pm bedtime."

Despite his daily exertions, the officer found it difficult to eat or sleep – by day his blood was diverted to his legs, leaving little to aid digestion, by night his body was repairing itself which caused considerable aches and pains.

"A pattern developed: the first half of the run shook out all the aches and pains of the previous day and the second half of the run became quite enjoyable as the endorphins – or it could have been the painkillers – kicked in," Brian added.

"I did however make the classic schoolboy error of starting off in shoes that were not properly run in. This caused a rather large and painful blister on one heel for the first few days and ever so slightly altered my running style."

"In the latter part of the challenge, it developed into inflammation and discomfort in my right leg. But it was only pain..."

"I am convinced this type of endurance event is as much a mental challenge as it is a physical challenge. There were days when it was really difficult to motivate myself, but once you put your running shoes on and get out on the road life becomes quite simple."

Beyond entering the record books, Brian, who lives in Kendal, raised more than £2,000 for the Brathay Trust which helps disadvantaged young people.

The second world record fell to Mne 'Vince' Brunning of 6 Assault Squadron RM in HMS Albion.

He set a time of 6h 53m 37.8 in the 100km (62m) indoor row as the assault ship continued her Baltic deployment.

In doing so, the green beret shaved 1m 18.2 seconds off the existing record in the 20-29 age group/lightweight category.

Barely had the Royal recovered from his exertions, than he promptly set the benchmark time over the same distance in the heavyweight category: 6h 49m 54.3s.

There were no existing British records in either category for this age group – and no world record for the heavyweight category.

'Vince' wasn't the only member of Albion's crew found on the rowing machines; 177 sailors and Royals rowed the distance between Port Stanley and Plymouth in aid of the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust for young people with special needs, while Albion's air department decided they would row continuously for 24 hours.

● Keep on Running... Shipmates and RM comrades spur Mne 'Vince' Brunning on to a world record in the 100km indoor row

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion

Riders hold their heads high

THE RN show jumping team made an excellent start to this year's military season with victory in the senior team competition over 1.05m fences at the Aldershot Show, writes Cdr Mark Leaning.

Captained by Lt Cdr Kate Welch on *It's Himself*, with Lt Cdr Rachel Firth on *Cromarty*, and MID Rose Neave on *Sweet William*, the RN A Team beat the Army Medical Service A Team into second place to take a well-deserved win.

This was the first team outing of the year and proved to be excellent preparation for their most important single event of the season: the Royal Windsor Horse Show, held a week later.

The RN fielded a squad of nine riders in a total entry of 90 competitors to take part in the 1.05m Land Rover Services Team Jumping.

The first round of the competition started at 7.15am – well before the crowds had arrived. By 10am the main arena grandstands were filling in anticipation of the first professional class of the day and the gathering crowd witnessed the conclusion of the first round of the Service competition with the RN B team fifth on four faults and the RN A team sixth with six faults.

The participating riders then had to wait until late afternoon before forming up in column by teams to parade around the main arena in front of the Queen.

On completion, and before a capacity crowd of several thousand, one nominated rider from each of the top 12 teams then took part in the second-round jump off.

Riding for RN A team, Mid Neave completed an impeccable clear round in a good time to leave



● The horse of Windsor... With their distinctive Senior Service saddles, the RN A Team (l-r) Lt Cdr Kate Welch, Mid Rose Neave and Lt Cdr Rachel Firth at the Royal Windsor Horse Show

the A Team in the lead with five riders left to jump.

Next up was Lt Beth Leckey on *Tiger's Eye*; she was riding with Lt Cdr Alasdair Peppe on *George* and Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark on *Rabbit*.

Pushing hard for a good time she had one fence down and the team finished with a score of eight faults, dropping them to seventh position.

The next team rider in was from the Defence Animal Centre

B Team who, with a final score of seven faults, fell behind RN A.

All eyes were then on the final three riders whose teams had each finished the first round with no faults.

It was a close-run thing as all three went clear and it was left to the clock to decide the final outcome: 1 – Kings Troop RHA A, 2 – Army Medical Services A (first in the Queen's Plate for unmounted units), 3 – Household

Cavalry MRA.

From the RN perspective, the A Team finished second in the Queen's Plate and fourth overall, while the B Team finished third in the Queen's Plate and seventh overall.

Although not a victory, this was a strong result on the back of victory at the Aldershot Show for a team that practises largely in its own time and provides all its own equipment.

Kart for kart's sake

THRUXTON Kart Circuit in Hampshire hosted the third round of the Southern **Endurance Kart**, writes PO Dutchy Holland, HMS Excellent.

There was a large turn-out – 25 teams in all, including the Royal Navy Automobile Club, represented by Teamworks under the direction of RNAS Yeovilton's Lt Kevin Westbrook (pictured below racing around the circuit).

After practice and qualifying, the six-hour race commenced with each driver taking the kart for approximately 90 minutes, before the compulsory driver changes and refuelling.

Having made a promising start to the season, lying third in the championship ahead of Thruxton, this was a weekend the team wanted to forget.

The race began with the team's No.48 kart starting from fourteenth on the grid.

The team were really struggling in the heat during the first two and a half hours.

They did, however, make steady progress through the field until a coming together (*good euphemism* – Ed) with another kart destroyed all hopes of achieving a top-ten finish.

The kart was taken to the paddock and stripped down, revealing a bent front stub axle and slightly twisted chassis.

Having acquired a scaffold pole to straighten the axle and chassis, it was 'all hands in' to assemble the kart – which took the sailors out of the race for a crucial hour.

With the vehicle fixed, Lt Westbrook returned to track and quickly started to pick his way back through the field, proving the team had the pace to run near the front before the finish.

After this result, round three will now become a 'dropped points round' as the season progresses.



Commandos avenge 2006 final defeat

DESPITE heavy rain leading up to the event and leaden skies on the first day, the 2007 Inter-Command **cricket** tournament at Portsmouth started on time, much to the amazement of many, writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, RNCC spokesman.

Five commands were represented – all wearing Twenty/20 coloured clothing: Portsmouth in their traditional blue, Devonport red, Naval Air in light blue, Scotland black and Royal Marines in green – again a veritable riot of colour.

Because of the withdrawal of Fleet, it was decided to run a 'round robin' tournament between the five teams, all playing each other to earn batting and bowling bonus points throughout the competition, in addition to points for a win.

To cap the contest, the two top-ranked teams would meet in the final.

Over the two days of the contest there were some fine performances from each of the Commands, particularly on the batting front.

For Scotland Lt Cdr Peter Deeks was the backbone of his side, regularly scoring runs; Portsmouth PO(PT) Mark Toogood notched up 164 runs throughout the competition; Sgt Sean Needham RM smashed 162 runs which included 105 in his first match at a run rate of eight an over; Mne Callum Smith hit 151 in two innings.

Navy skipper Lt Cdr Paul Snelling, playing for Devonport, amassed 178 runs in his four innings and, for the Naval Air Command, Lt Justin Matthews RN totalled 198 which included two not-out visits to the crease.

The were also some decent bowling returns, not only from known representative and ex-representative players, but also from some newcomers too; their performances were noted by RNCC committee members and selectors.

At the end of the round robin stage, Scotland were in fifth place, Portsmouth fourth and Devonport third, which meant that Naval Air and the Royals had to meet each other in the final, their previous encounter in the early stage resulting in a win for the green berets by 27 runs.

This year's final was a re-run of the 2006 decider, which saw the Air Command take the trophy.

The Royals were out for revenge, although nobody really dominated a low-scoring match.

Matthews hit an unbeaten 54 in a NAC score of 120-3 after their 20 overs, but it was Mne Alvin Pollard who carefully put a match-winning score together, scoring 53 not out and guiding the Royals past their target with just one ball to spare.

For his efforts and judgment, Pollard was awarded player of the final.

Capt John Fulford RN, Chairman RNCC, paid tributes to players, officials, and various back room staff who had contributed to make the festival possible.

25x13=Ark

TWENTY-FIVE members of HMS Ark Royal's ship's company took part in the Gothenburg **half-marathon** when the carrier visited the Swedish port on her Baltic deployment.

They were joined on the streets of Gothenburg by 38,000 fellow runners and were cheered around the course, which ended in the city centre, by thousands of locals.

WO2 Craig Spring posted the fastest time of the Ark entrants, completing the 13-mile course in 1h 28m 12s.



Incom-para-ble achievements

THE RN and RM Paragliding Team trounced the Army and RAF in a closely-fought Alpine Paragliding Competition during a 12-day sports tour of Slovenia.

The squad headed to Tolmin in the Soca Valley where they faced not merely a challenge from fellow Brits, but also the Belgian Air Force, at the most prestigious event in the Joint Service paragliding calendar.

The sailors and Royals took their largest team yet to the championships (eight matelots, three green berets).

Hopes were high as the team arrived in the Alps, despite the RAF and Army fielding far larger teams.

Some fine weather and spring conditions allowed a couple of days of good training before the actual competition.

There followed several days of competition flying as around 45 paragliders gracefully moved about the Slovenian skies. Competitors were expected to fly around waypoints on a course in the fastest possible time.

"This was my first time on thermals," said Lt Cdr Oscar Whild, "and it meant I flew 19 kilometres down a valley rather than a few hundred yards off Butser Hill. My first flight lasted 2½ hours, not 20 minutes."

Despite the new conditions, the RNRM team quickly established themselves, scoring first and second places in the first task, continuing to maintain the open class lead throughout.

All pilots recorded many significant flights with most surpassing their personal best performances.

This is the first time that RN and RM Paragliding Team has won such an event (although the RN hanggliding team regularly beats all comers) and all team members contributed to this success.

The intermediate class was won by Cdr Dave Hadfield and the open by team captain Lt Cdr Rory Lynch.

The rest of the team were: Cdr Jerry Owens, Capt Rich Alston RM, Lt Jack Daniels, Lt Paul Richman, WO2 Bert Lane RM, CPOWEA Steve Bamlett, POAET Jim Howe and Cpl Grant Oseland RM.

"It was immensely satisfying for the smallest team to take all the silver as the other two Services always attend these events in far greater numbers than we do," Lt Cdr Whild added.

Paragliding and hanggliding are adventurous training activities and all service personnel can learn free at two specialised military centres in Crickhowell, Wales, or Wertach in southern Germany.

Once qualified, RN and RM personnel can hire equipment for a nominal fee from the Royal Navy Hanggliding and Paragliding Association (RNHPA). See www.rnhpa.co.uk for details.

● Whild about paragliding... Lt Cdr Oscar Whild with his distinctive turquoise canopy emblazoned with the Team RN logo

Talent in depth at Dartmouth

THE past six months has seen BRNC Dartmouth achieve great success across the sporting spectrum.

Firstly the college football team (coached by LPT Peplow & LOM Wilkinson) lost only once at home in the entire campaign.

As usual many faces come and go from the team and the college has never been able to select a settled side.

One of the most difficult things this past season has been selecting a squad of 15 people for each fixture when over 30 cadets were desperate to wear the Dartmouth shirt. That commitment was reflected in the college finishing fourth in the local premier division.

The college's rugby team (coached by Lt Clark) set themselves some ambitious targets, which overall they achieved.

Victories against BRNC's French counterparts, Ecole Navale, (23-10) and our RAF cousins at the Intercollegiate Games (16-8) were tremendous – especially as they were both away fixtures.

Having a decent run in the Navy Cup would be difficult but was delivered when on the 9th May BRNC contested the final against HMS Heron... who eventually triumphed in a full-blooded game, 33-15.

On a broader level, maintaining RFU affiliation status by playing 20 fixtures in a season was achieved and by offering Dartmouth's facilities in preparation for fixtures, the RNRU have used BRNC as a base for fixtures in the West Country.

And numerous college players have turned out for RN representative sides: 1st XV, U23s, women and veterans, have all benefited, and two players appeared for the U23 Combined Services team.

The RN(W) sports teams (headed by Lt Buck and LPT

Phillips) have also scored notable successes.

The season began with a mainly novice team entering netball's Navy Cup and ended with a BRNC triumph in the final over HMS Heron 40-12.

The team built on that success by entering the Plymouth Area tournament, where they topped the seven-strong league.

The men's hockey team defeated the RAF in a tight match 3-2 and progressed to the final of the Navy Cup, where they were defeated by HMS Nelson. The season has seen five cadets selected for the U23s, five for the RN(W), one for the RN Seniors and one female cadet for the Combined Services squad.

Although dormant for a few years, the college now has a fencing team (led by Lt Cdr Lees).

With the arrival of a handful of young officers already able to take to the 'piste' and a large number keen to give it a go, BRNC entered the RN Knock-Outs – and won by consistently scoring, giving Dartmouth the highest team average.

The college now has a civilian coach twice a week to improve fencing skills. At the recent RN vs Cambridge University contest, the establishment was able to field two sides (the competition was eventually drawn).

In the swimming pool, the BRNC team were very successful during the Combined Armed Forces and ASA Masters Swimming Championships at Easter, collecting 15 golds and five silvers. Dartmouth also had four personnel selected for the victorious RN team which competed in the Inter Services.

Another phoenix to rise from the ashes this year has been the BRNC rowing club.

A recent agreement with Dart Totnes Rowing Club (DTRC) to use their world-class start facility, has cemented this new era led by the Commander, Cdr Rich King.

It's an important link for BRNC – and RN – rowing, as these fantastic facilities give senior and novice rowers the opportunity to further their sport.

The link has already reaped rewards for Dartmouth, who defeated the RAF in a coxed four at the Intercollegiate Games. BRNC dominated the race from the start, winning by six lengths to claim the title.

The next day the team travelled to London to compete in the International Fours Head of the River Race competing in the Armed Forces Challenge Cup, representing the Senior Service.

The four cadets lifted the cup and came 19th out of 200 overall.

More recently, four senior cadets have been selected to represent the RN at the International Head of the River Race held again in London; this is the same course as the Oxford Cambridge Boat Race. Unfortunately, the race was cancelled due to 'sinking conditions' on the Tideway.

And finally... changing tack to sailing (headed by Lt Cdr Adams), the college lifted gold in the international Trofeo Delle Academie Navali in Livorno, Italy.

Twenty-four naval academies from around the world, including Japan, China, Sweden, Germany, France, and Belgium.

The lottery to establish which country received which particular boat ensured BRNC was allocated the only craft which had not arrived at Livorno.

After a day of panic and valuable time missed on the water, the crew went to bed the night before the first race still without a boat.

Luckily, it arrived and the team rapidly rigged and tuned her in time for the first race, finally launching her one hour before the first start.

The boat was considerably older and supposedly heavier than the other 23 boats, but pure skill, determination and superior knowledge of the sport ensured BRNC's team – MID D Roach, S/Lt A Penfold, S/Lt D Bacon, S/Lt R Wilson and S/Lt T Gell – triumphed.



● The BRNC team grafting on their way to victory in the Trofeo Delle Academie Navali in Livorno, Italy

The five-man crew competed in the j24 class boat with seven races over four days. They beat Sweden into second place by a clear eight points.

Their success crowned an impressive sporting season for the college.

"It is fantastic to see the next generation of naval officers achieve

such success in their sporting endeavours," said BRNC's Commanding Officer Cdre Martin Alabaster.

"We are now very much looking forward to competing against – and defeating – the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst when it visits Dartmouth this month for the annual sporting competition."

Next month



Traffic stoppers – on the front line in the drugs war with Ocean



'Ton Air – all the action from Yeovilton Air Day



In Portland's memory – Fleet Air Arm honours fallen airmen



Nirvana in Varna – in Bulgaria with the Orion task force

Plus

Ledbury goes home

And

Farewell to the ONA



SPORT



● Bourne to be wild... Sgt Richie Lake and Steve Pidsley in Go Commando I leap above the surf off Bournemouth

Picture: Shaun Boggust

Hockey starts in parad-ice

I, II, III... Go Commando

AFTER a highly-credible first season in the exhilarating zapcat powerboat championships, the Royals have taken to the sea in strength to push for the title in 2007.

Trailblazer Sgt Richie Lake and his boat Go Commando have now been joined by two more green beret-driven racers, fittingly Go Commando II and III, II driven by Maj Aldeiy Alderson and Lt Orlando Rogers, and III by siblings Cpl Paul and C/Sgt Ed Holt.

Zapcats are inflatable boats fitted with a 50HP two-stroke engine, capable of racing along at speeds of up to 50mph.

There are now 35 zapcat boats racing in the national championships, split into two divisions.

The three Royal zapcats' first race of the 2007 season took place over two days in the surf off Bournemouth.

The weekend began badly for Go Commando, courtesy of engine trouble, but Richie still managed to make the day's final, posting seventh place.

Go Commando II went two better, with fifth position; Go Commando III's racing was curtailed by a broken steering shaft.

Day two saw Go Commandos I and II battling out in a thrilling final.

Richie led for much of the race until a freak wave and awesome jump slowed him down, allowing Aldeiy and Orlando to catch up and overtake.

The two Royals' boats vied for first place, but as the craft rounded the top buoy on the course, Go Commando was caught in the wash and beaten by its green beret competitor.

The races at Bournemouth left Go Commando in eighth place in the national league, with II in tenth and III 24th.

THE Royal Navy lifted ice hockey's inaugural tri-Service cup after three gruelling days in the rink.

It took first-class netminding from HMS Endurance's LS(AWW) Liam 'Stretch' Armstrong to tip the balance in the decisive clash with title favourites the Army on the Sheffield ice.

The triumph is the culmination of a year's growing success in the rink.

Two tournaments were crammed into three days in South Yorkshire: the Combined Inter-Services Command (ISCC) and tri-Service with ten base/unit/regimental sides competing for the former trophy and three elite representative sides for the latter.

This year's competition was the first to include a proper tri-Service contest with the elite sides of all three forces vying for the cup.

Ice Sheffield provided an excellent venue for the upgraded competition, with full use being made of the two newly-built rinks over three days of play.

The ISCC has traditionally been dominated by the Army, with the REME Stallions winning the previous four tournaments.

The RN participated for the first time last year in Dundee, surprising many by claiming third place.

The standard of play has been steadily increasing and there was a great deal of hope that this year's event would be hotly contested with a wider selection of teams competing for a place in the final.

With ever greater number of players joining the Navy team, the Senior Service managed to field two sides, Navy Red and Navy White, while the RAF and Army



● Netminder LS(AWW) Liam Armstrong looks on as Mne Johnny Underwood glides around the Sheffield ice

Picture: Paul Lewis, www.lossiemouthjets.co.uk

fielded four teams apiece.

Both RN sides progressed from the group stages of the competition – RN White eased through with five straight victories, while Red topped their pool.

After relatively easy quarter-final clashes, the twin RN assault on the ISCC ended at the semi-final stage – just.

Navy Red found themselves pitted against the REME Stallions; the Stallions were keen to avenge the 8-0 defeat (their first in the ISCC) they had suffered at the hands of Navy White in the first round while Navy White eventually faced the Army All-Stars.

The All-Stars triumphed 6-3 (and subsequently lifted the trophy), while the Stallions saw off the Navy Red challenge 7-5.

The tri-Service contest saw all three teams playing each other, with the two top sides then competing in a grand final.

The competition opened with RN up against the Army, with the soldiers on the end of a 4-3 defeat – despite leading 3-2 late in the third period.

The Army bounced back from that loss to overcome the RAF 4-2 in a physical encounter.

That meant a draw would be enough to ensure the RN's appearance in the final – and they entered the match with fresh players not available for the previous game because of service commitments.

The extra offence generated by the new arrivals would prove too much for the RAF with Mne Alex

Hankins (40 Cdo) leading the way with six goals in a 11-5 demolition of the Air Force.

The showcase event took place on Friday evening between two tired but very determined teams in front of a substantial crowd.

The game was dominated by numerous penalties to either side which rather marred the flow of the match.

Nevertheless, the Senior Service bagged three early goals, while LS(AWW) Armstrong, a last-minute addition to the team who was returning to the ice for the first time in four years, ensured the Army had little to show for their numerous men advantages, denying the soldiers on more than one occasion in front of the Navy goal to keep the score close.

The game would remain tight until the very end with the Army closing the lead on a number of occasions.

The turning point came in the second period when Armstrong stopped a penalty shot, crushing Army hopes of reducing the gap to one goal.

They would never recover and despite a few close calls and an increasing number of injuries which started to significantly reduce the size of the Senior Service bench, the Navy put the game out of the soldiers' reach in the third period, eventually winning 7-5 to be crowned the first tri-Service Champions.

"This is what we had worked for all year" said Lt Cdr Alain Bernard (FOST Devonport).

"I am glad that the guys' efforts paid off. Everyone is very tired – a lot of hockey has been played but the competition has definitely been a success with ice hockey reaching the next level as a Service sport."

